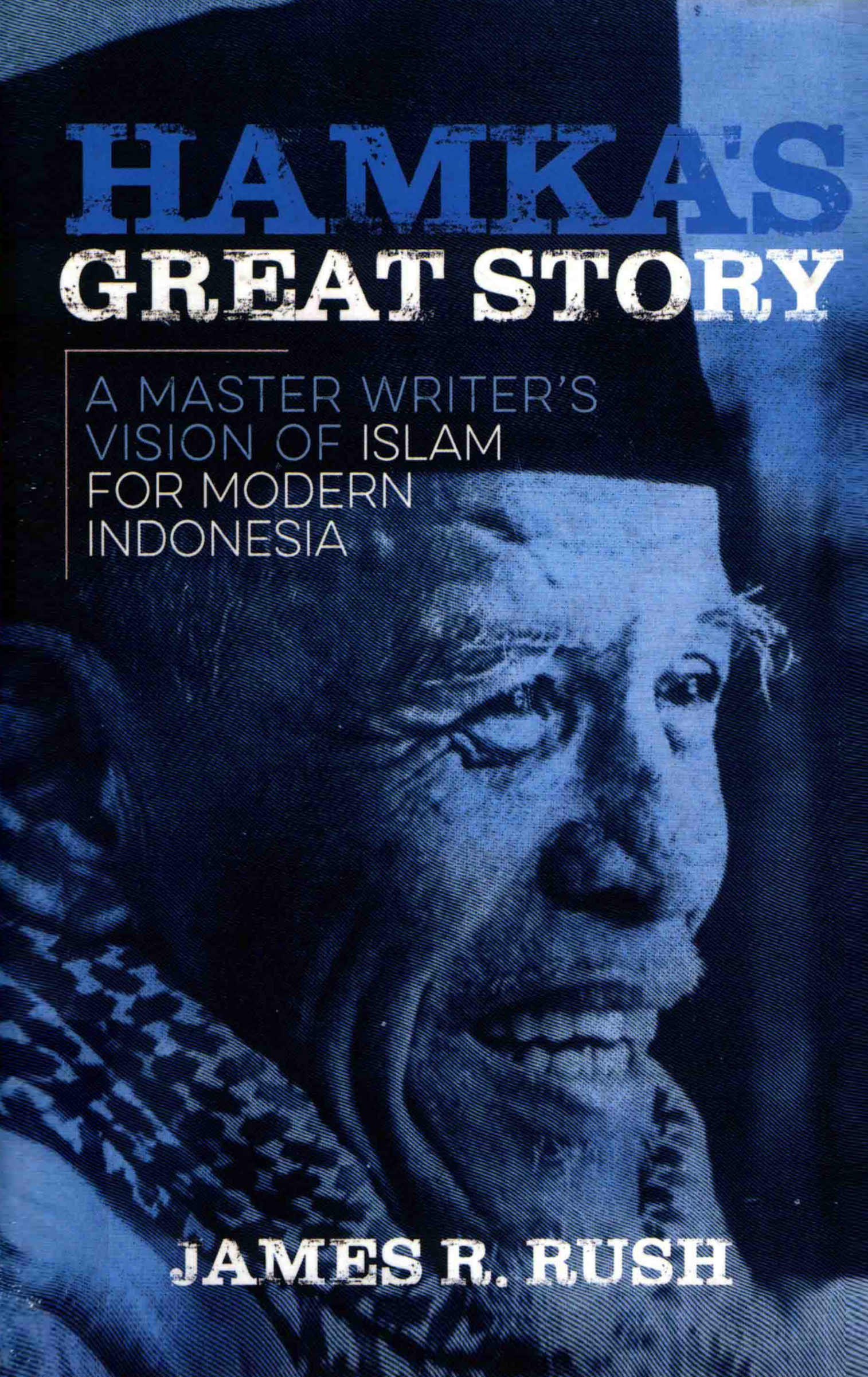
HAMKA'S GREAT STORY

A MASTER WRITER'S VISION OF ISLAM FOR MODERN INDONESIA



JAMES R. RUSH

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

Hamka's Great Story

NEW PERSPECTIVES
IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

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A Master Writer's Vision of Islam for Modern Indonesia

JAMES R. RUSH

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Preface

There can be little doubt that imperialism shaped the world we live in. The Western colonies and other projections of Western power that blanketed much of Asia and Africa by the early twentieth century created a world system so asymmetrical that whole civilizations reeled in response.[1] Amid the tumultuous stirrings of humiliation and pride that ensued among defeated peoples emerged the ideas and movements that culminated in today's nation-states. Writers and intellectuals across Asia played a key role in absorbing and spreading new ideas from the West and in articulating publicly the degree to which these ideas could be reconciled with their own hallowed beliefs and traditions. Hinduism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Islam were passionately challenged, defended, and adapted as intellectuals and activists debated strategies for self-strengthening and resistance and later—after colonies had yielded to nations—for shaping new national societies. Hamka (Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah), the prolific author and Muslim leader who is the subject of this study, may at first appear to be a uniquely Indonesian figure. But his life's work was also part of the great global yearning to reconcile deeply held religious beliefs with the bewildering challenges and possibilities of the imperial world and its aftermath—in his case, to conceptualize Islam for Indonesia.

It was Louis Hammann at Gettysburg College, in a class called Religions of the World, who taught me that there might be something interesting and compelling about what other people believe. He introduced me to the idea, surprising to me at eighteen, that people elsewhere might actually understand everything in the world differently than I do. This insight, and courses about Asia by Gettysburg's J. Roger Stemen and my subsequent stint in Malaysia with the Peace Corps, led me to study Southeast Asian history. Having embarked on this path, I was led by Harry Benda at Yale to Indonesia and to Islam.

I first encountered Hamka in 1971 or 1972 during Indonesian language lessons in graduate school. His stories drew me in. I realized that, like nothing else I was reading at the time, these simple novels and short stories—and others by writers of his generation—could bring Indonesia to life for me, or at least certain

parts of its history. Here were human characters and their dilemmas, intimate scenes of cities and towns and villages and of changing times (steamships, trains, and cars), all rendered in a distinctive Indonesian voice.

For those of us in the West who undertook to study Southeast Asia in the period following World War II, a time when new nations were being formed within the shells of old empires, it was an article of faith that we should move beyond the colonial perspectives of earlier scholars and attempt to understand Southeast Asia as Southeast Asians themselves did, or at least from a regional perspective.[2] This project yielded groundbreaking studies in history, anthropology, politics, and religious studies that drew heavily from Southeast Asian primary sources and fieldwork. For historians, however, the overwhelming weight of Western archival and scholarly sources often meant that our research was heavily influenced by the perspectives, interests, and bureaucratic routines of other Westerners. This was certainly true of my own earlier study of colonial Indonesia, *Opium to Java*, which grew out of my doctoral years.[3] It was this problem that drew me back to Hamka, who wrote not only fiction but in virtually every other genre as well, and prolifically so. Here was a wholly authentic Indonesian voice through which I might see Indonesia from the inside. Hamka did not intend for me, or anyone like me, to read his books. He wrote strictly for his fellow Indonesians. To them, he spoke about almost every subject imaginable. To them, his mind was an open book. And thus, accidentally, it became so for me, too.

It was not until January 1982 that I went to Indonesia and launched my research project about Hamka. He was very much on people's minds that year, having passed away only the summer before. (I carried with me his letter inviting me to pursue my research, sent three months before he died.) His colleagues and contemporaries were eager to talk about him. I met and interviewed Mohammad Natsir and Mohammad Roem, his fellow Masjumi stalwarts. I met M. Yunan Nasution, his partner at the Medan weekly *Pedoman Masjarakat* of the 1930s and lifelong friend and Muhammadiyah man. I met Hamka's revered mentor and brother-in-law Sutan Mansur and his wife, Fatimah, Hamka's older sister. General A. H. Nasution, H. B. Jassin, and Abdurrahman Wahid opened their doors. So did Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Hamka's great nemesis of the 1960s and at the time only recently released from the prison camp on Buru Island and still under house arrest. At the Masjid Agung Al-Azhar, Hamka's mosque, I met his son Rusydi and others who knew him well. Eventually, I met other members of his family and a wide array of Hamka's admirers and detractors. (The latter included Pramoedya, of course, and Mohammad Rasjidi,

a Sorbonne-trained PhD in Islamic law who told me conspiratorially that Hamka's writing was all lifted from Arabic-language publications.)

Meanwhile, I scoured libraries and archives and bookstores for Hamka's old books, magazines, and pamphlets. It soon became clear that, whereas certain of his books were circulating prolifically in new editions, others were hard to find. Hamka himself had not saved his own books systematically, his son Rusydi told me, lending them out incautiously to friends and students. I perused the used bookstalls for old copies and found many in threadbare condition, with torn or absent covers and dry, fragile bindings that broke in my hands when I opened them. Of my long list of Hamka's publications, there were many I could not find anymore.

Someone said, "You should try Jassin's archive." H. B. Jassin was an authoritative critic of modern Indonesian literature who played an important role in Hamka's life in the 1960s. He was also Indonesia's first literature archivist. By 1982 the city of Jakarta had housed his vast private collection in a public building at the Taman Ismail Marzuki arts center. "Do you have anything on Hamka?" I asked. "Let me see," answered a young archivist. Soon, he arrived with a large archive box full of books and manuscripts. I had barely begun surveying this gold mine when a second box arrived. Then a third, and so on until there was a table full of archive boxes, all marked "Hamka." In them were first editions of books, prepublication manuscripts, rare pamphlets and magazines, and hundreds of newspaper clippings of articles by and about Hamka spanning thirty years. (Jassin had compiled similar collections for virtually every significant writer of his generation!) With this rich lode added to my own growing collection and related primary documents from the National Library and the National Museum, I was ready to plunge in.

Ready . . . but years passed again as other work kept Hamka on the back burner. A Fulbright Senior Scholar award in 2004–2005 gave me a chance at last to spend a year at the Walisongo State Islamic Institute (Institut Agama Islam Negeri Walisongo), where I again devoted myself to Hamka and began formulating this book.

As I submerged myself deeper and deeper into Hamka's body of writing, it became clear that, irrespective of the genre, from short stories and anecdotes and hastily dashed-off advice columns to serious studies of history, theology, and the Qur'an itself, Hamka was always writing to a higher purpose. I began to see his lifetime of writing as a single text. In it, Hamka was weaving together the threads of Islam's hopeful message with those of his readers' everyday lives and the larger events of their lifetimes, events that were transforming a Dutch

colony of almost incomprehensible size and diversity into the single nation of Indonesia. Thus emerged the organizing concept for this book.

Garrulous, sentimental, and opinionated, Hamka earned a vast readership. Despite his entertaining and popular style, he dealt in serious matters. Readers turned to him for guidance in a profound arena of their lives. Indeed, for millions of Indonesian Muslims, Hamka became the master storyteller of their generation, the creator of a master narrative or Great Story that, in Robert Berkhofer's formulation, ordered the past, interpreted the present, and predicted the future.[4] In a Great Story, it is not just the large print that matters—the Prophet Muhammad, monotheism, the Five Pillars of Islam, the Qur'an and Hadith, or, for that matter, Indonesia—it's all the fine print, too. It's stories and proverbs and figures of speech, heroes, villains, and local histories. It's gossip and jokes and what ails you. Hamka's Great Story provided answers not only to the many small questions on people's minds—Is it okay to eat margarine?—but also to the very large ones. How should I live? What does it mean to be Muslim? To be Indonesian? One could find one's bearings inside the Great Story. This is what Hamka provided for his readers. (He also provided them a rousing account of his own life, which is a pretty great story, too.)

What Hamka provides for the rest of us, students of Indonesia, is the rare and probably unique range of his lifetime of writing and his important perspective and influence as a Muslim public intellectual during the country's formative years. To grasp his Great Story is to enter the prevailing discourse of a large swath of modern Indonesian society. This discourse is ordinarily glossed as "modernist," and its main underlying elements are widely understood to mean Islam heavily influenced by Muhammad Abduh and other late nineteenth-century reformers and characterized by the embrace of modern Western learning and a call to purity, including the rejection of superstition, magic, and outdated teachings of Islam. "Modernist" thinking in Indonesia is associated with the mass organization Muhammadiyah and commonly juxtaposed with "traditionalist," a term that means a rejection of the modernist claims and an adherence to the older teachings of the Shafi'i school of law as long practiced in Java, transmitted by revered and often charismatic teachers (*kyai*) and associated with Muhammadiyah's rival mass organization, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU).

Understanding these categories is essential to understanding many aspects of modern Indonesian history and politics, since the cleavages of the two orientations have often been in play at key moments. Scholars have used them repeatedly, if often superficially. Hamka's Great Story reveals the "modernist" identity intimately and exposes its many-layered depth and human content. Yet his Great Story was not limited to modernists alone. As NU's Abdurrahman

Wahid told me, at the mosque that Hamka led, Muslims of every stripe "were proud to pray."[5]

Among the first to call attention to Hamka in the West were two of my own early mentors. In 1956 Harry Benda translated a passage from Hamka's *Ayahku* (My father) in which Hamka describes how the indomitable Haji Rasul defies the Japanese wartime occupiers by refusing to bow to the emperor.[6] Rufus Hendon, also of Yale, was the first to translate one of Hamka's short stories into English. This was "Anak Tinggal" ("A Deserted Child") in 1968.[7] Karel Steenbrink was among the first to recognize Hamka's significant role and wrote several insightful articles about him. Later still, Jeffrey Hadler's "Home, Fatherhood, Succession: Three Generations of Amrullahs in Twentieth-Century Indonesia" of 1998 and his 2008 *Muslims and Matriarchs: Cultural Resilience in Indonesia through Jihad and Colonialism* astutely placed Hamka and his family in the sociocultural and political milieu of the Minangkabau heartland of the early twentieth century. Deliar Noer, C. W. Watson, Henk Maier, Mun'im Sirry, and Wan Sabri Wan Yusof have all written of Hamka in valuable English-language studies.[8]

Despite this, Hamka more often than not has appeared as a bit player in studies of modern Indonesian history, as in Anthony Reid's study of Medan, *The Blood of the People*, where he appears peering over the shoulders of other city luminaries in a photograph from 1939.[9] In Azyumardi Azra's *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia*, a mere paragraph is devoted to him in the epilogue.[10] In another sense, however, Hamka has been ubiquitous. He has been a source in countless works of modern Indonesian history, including groundbreaking studies of the Muhammadiyah and Islamic modernism by Taufik Abdullah, Alfian, Deliar Noer, and William Roff (writing about Singapore and Malaya). Indeed, for certain key episodes in the development of Islamic modernism in Sumatra, it is no exaggeration to say that Hamka wrote "the first draft of history."

Within Indonesia, Hamka has been the subject of a large body of Indonesian-language scholarship and critical writing. This includes several doctoral dissertations and master's theses, among them works by M. Yunan Yusuf, Samsul Nizar, Muhammad Nazar, and Mansur, as well as astute critiques and appreciations by Abdurrahman Wahid, Dawam Rahardjo, Nurcholish Majid, Azyumardi Azra, Ahmad Hakim, M. Thalhah, and others included in the bibliography. I have called upon this literature extensively.

Hamka wrote often about Orientalists, by which he meant Western Christians and Jews who studied Islam. By his definition, I am inescapably one of them. As a boy, I was a regular at Sunday school and church; I memorized

Bible verses and learned probably hundreds of hymns whose sweet melodies and lyrics—"Oh, He walks with me and He talks to me, and He tells me I am His own"—still linger in my mind. So, although I have long since abandoned the theological teachings of my family church, my spiritual sensibilities continue to be shaped by my upbringing. Culturally, I am Christian.

In the same sense, I am American. I have lived my life during a time of American ascendancy in the world and have been shaped by its neighborhoods and schools, by its material wealth and power, and also by its own Great Story. (When I was twenty-two, for example, I was a Peace Corps teacher in a Malaysian high school. No Malaysian volunteers had come to teach in my American high school. This didn't strike me as odd at the time.) The fact that I often find myself at odds with my country's behavior in the world makes me no less American. There is no escaping. I am an American Christian writing about an Indonesian Muslim.

Even so, as a historian of Indonesia and Southeast Asia, I have spent the better part of my career attempting earnestly to breach the boundaries of my own history to grasp with empathy the history of others. I present this study of Hamka in that spirit.

Acknowledgments

This book has been a long time coming, and my debts are large. Among those who helped get me started were Anthony Reid, Rufus Hendon, William Roff, William Frederick, William Liddle, Robin Winks, Ibu Hermina Tobing, and Katharine Pierce. A Fulbright grant under the Islamic Civilization Research Program in 1982 funded my first year of research about Hamka in Indonesia, during which I had the tremendous good fortune of meeting Tjuk Pratiwo-wijanto, who assisted me in matters of language and research throughout the year. My good friend Onghokham opened many doors, including those of his own unique home. Alfian, of the Lembaga Ilmu Pengatahuan Indonesia (LIPI, the Indonesian Institute of Sciences), was my research sponsor. Many others were generous, including Taufik Abdullah, Mochtar Naim, H. B. Jassin, and the many figures who agreed to lengthy interviews. At the Masjid Agung Al-Azhar, Rusydi Hamka, M. Sjafi'i Anwar, Zainal Arifin, and Lukman Harun were enormously generous. Amora Lubis guided me helpfully through the sites of Hamka's early formation in West Sumatra. I was fortunate to meet Karel Steenbrink, a fellow student of Hamka, at the Universitas Islam Negeri (State Islamic University) Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. In Jakarta I was hosted warmly by the family of Soegito Sigit in Kebun Kacang and enjoyed the good company and advice of Toenggoel and Nelly Siagian, Fred and Alice Bunnell, Yang Su Wan, Saraswati Sunindyo, Mark Hoffman, Krishna Sen, David Hill, and Nasir Tamara, among many others. At the U.S. embassy, William La Salle, Phil Cohen, Fred Coffey, and Riley Sever assisted me in Fulbright and other matters; at the Pusat Dokumentasi Sastra H. B. Jassin (H. B. Jassin Center for Literary Documentation), Harkrisyati and Oyon Sofyan were endlessly helpful.

Subsequently at Yale I had the good fortune to share my early research with the Southeast Asia Council, including James Scott, Hal Conklin, Joe Errington, and Charles Bryant, and also Jeffrey Hadler, an undergraduate at the time who later became an authority on Hamka and the Minangkabau and whose counsel has been invaluable. Others who have fostered this work over its long years of gestation include Robert Hefner, John Sidel, Henk Maier, Michael Feener, Laurie Sears, and Ami Ayalon. At Arizona State University, Mark Woodward has been a boon to this project alongside a host of other colleagues, including Juliane Schober, Chris Lundry, Peter Suwarno, Christopher Duncan, Christine

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In 2004–2005 a Fulbright Senior Scholar grant afforded me the opportunity to spend the better part of a year at the IAIN Walisongo in Semarang, where I was sponsored by the institute's rector, Abdul Djamil. My wife, Sunny, and I are grateful to Pak Djamil for hosting us so generously. I profited greatly from the practical assistance and knowledge of my colleagues there, including Ahmad Gunaryo, Abdurrahman Masud, M. Darori Amin, and Elly Sholihan. A. Khoirul Umam was my enterprising research assistant. His help was invaluable. Many thanks, too, to Hermawan Sulistyo and his wife, Iing, for fostering our stay in so many ways, and to several others in Indonesia who in this and later visits provided additional sources, guidance, insights, and encouragement; among these are Esther Sianipar, Branden Eastwood, Mochtar Pabottingi, Ahmad Sjafi'i Maarif, Azyumardi Azra, Gusti Asnan, Teuku Chairul Wisal, and Irfan Hamka.

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Finally, I wish to thank Gwen Walker at the University of Wisconsin Press and the editors of the New Perspectives in Southeast Asian Studies series for taking *Hamka* aboard. I am especially grateful to my referees at the press, Eric Tagliacozzo and Anna M. Gade, for reading the manuscript both generously and critically and for challenging me to improve important sections of it. It is much better for their astute interventions. What errors remain are mine alone.

I have lived with Hamka a long time. This means that people who are close to me have been living with him, too. The project began when my children, Meg and Billy, were still little. Now they live in distant cities and have children of their own. For them, this eventually became the "don't ask Dad about his book" book. It was not so easy for my wife, Sunny, who married into the project nearly twenty-five years ago and has endured to the end, knowing in her own inscrutable way when to ask and when not to. (There have been exceptions.) I am grateful to her for giving me the space I needed to bring Hamka's story to a close. And for so many other good things along the way.

Note on Spelling, Transliteration, and Translation

During the period under discussion in this book, the spelling of Indonesian words shifted from colonial-era practices (e.g., *masjarakat, pandji, repoloesi,* Tjilatjap, Soekarno) to postcolonial ones (*masyarakat, panji, revolusi,* Cilacap, Sukarno). This shift did not occur uniformly, and in the 1950s and 1960s one finds examples of both side by side in many Indonesian publications, including Hamka's. In this book, the original spellings are used when they occur in book and periodical titles, e.g. *Pedoman Masjarakat, Sedjarah Umat Islam* (but *Sejarah Umat Islam* in later editions); otherwise, contemporary spellings are applied.

Names can be problematic. I have used the postcolonial spelling for Sukarno, for example, but the older spelling for Soeharto—both to reflect Soeharto's practice of signing his name this way and to minimize the likelihood that readers will confuse these two leaders with similar single names. Ease for readers has also guided the treatment of pluralizing some frequently used Indonesian nouns with an English "s"; thus we have *ulama*s, *kyai*s, *pantun*s, and *shaykh*s. In contrast, the "s" is not used for several other words in plural form, for example, *adat, negeri, penghulu,* and *kaba.*

In the case of Arabic, the original spelling is used for publication titles and direct quotations. In other cases, a simplified system of transliteration that reflects scholarly conventions and the *Chicago Manual of Style* has been applied. Some inconsistencies may remain. Translations from the Indonesian are mine, unless otherwise indicated.

Hamka's Great Story

Prologue

Bernenek yang turun dari gunung Merapi
Berkiblat ke Ka'batullah
Berfikir yang dinamis
Bersatu dalam Bhinneka Tunggal Ika.

[We are people . . .]
Whose ancestors descended from Mount Merapi;
Who direct our prayers to the Ka'ba, the house of Allah;
Who think dynamically; and
Who are united under [the slogan] "From many, one."

Hamka, 1970

Like that of many twentieth-century men and women, Hamka's story begins as a colonial story.

The great empires of the modern colonial world peaked in the early twentieth century, a time when Britain, France, Holland, the United States, and lesser others dominated the globe in a patchwork of colonies, dependent territories, and spheres of influence. The sudden breakdown of this system after World War II resulted in the modern map of the world, with its hundreds of sovereign nation-states, small and large. Indonesia was among the largest of these, a new nation whose boundaries comported almost perfectly with those of the Dutch East Indies (or Netherlands India), a tropical colony that stretched five thousand kilometers across the Malay Archipelago and was forty-three times larger than Holland itself. The Dutch created their colony from hundreds of kingdoms and territories that they had conquered or otherwise subjugated since their arrival in Southeast Asia around 1600. Their fifty million Native subjects (or Inlanders, as they called them) were staggeringly

far-flung and diverse.[1] And yet, by the early twentieth century, a small vanguard of Native activists was able to reconceptualize the colony of the Indies as the nation-to-be of "Indonesia." The nationalists agitated, Japanese armies intervened, global plates shifted—and Indonesia came to be. Sukarno, the country's first president, proclaimed it so in August 1945. And by 1949, following a bitter struggle with the Dutch, it was a fact.

This is how Hamka (Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah) and others of his mountain homeland in West Sumatra, Minangkabau—not so long ago a kingdom in its own right—first became Natives and then, in 1945, Indonesians.[2]

Born in 1908, Hamka came of age at the very apex of Dutch power in the Indies but also during a time when anti-Dutch agitation was rife and when the dream of "Indonesia" was taking root among young nationalists. In the full flush of youth, he embraced this dream utterly.[3] At the same time, the world of Islam was also astir as new ideas and energy pulsing from Egypt and the Muslim Holy Lands coursed to the Indies. Hamka's own father was a fiery Muslim reformer. From him and others Hamka absorbed the urgent need to mobilize Islam to shape modern Muslim societies and, in particular, modern Indonesian society. As Hamka settled into a lifetime of writing, these two powerful ideas—of an independent Indonesia and a revitalized Islam—melded into the single master narrative of his writing and his life. It became his Great Story: Islam for Indonesia. This vision would unfold gradually at first as Hamka emerged from his youthful experiments as a writer and achieved his first great florescence in the 1930s in the bustling Sumatran trade hub of Medan as editor of a popular weekly magazine, *Pedoman Masjarakat* (Society's compass). The magazine itself and a concurrent stream of stories and novels and popular religious books reached an Indies-wide audience. In this prodigious body of early work, Hamka laid the foundations for his Great Story by linking Islam to the social anxieties and upheavals of the age and also to its great political aspiration, a free Indonesia. By the time the Japanese invaded in early 1942, he had made a name for himself.

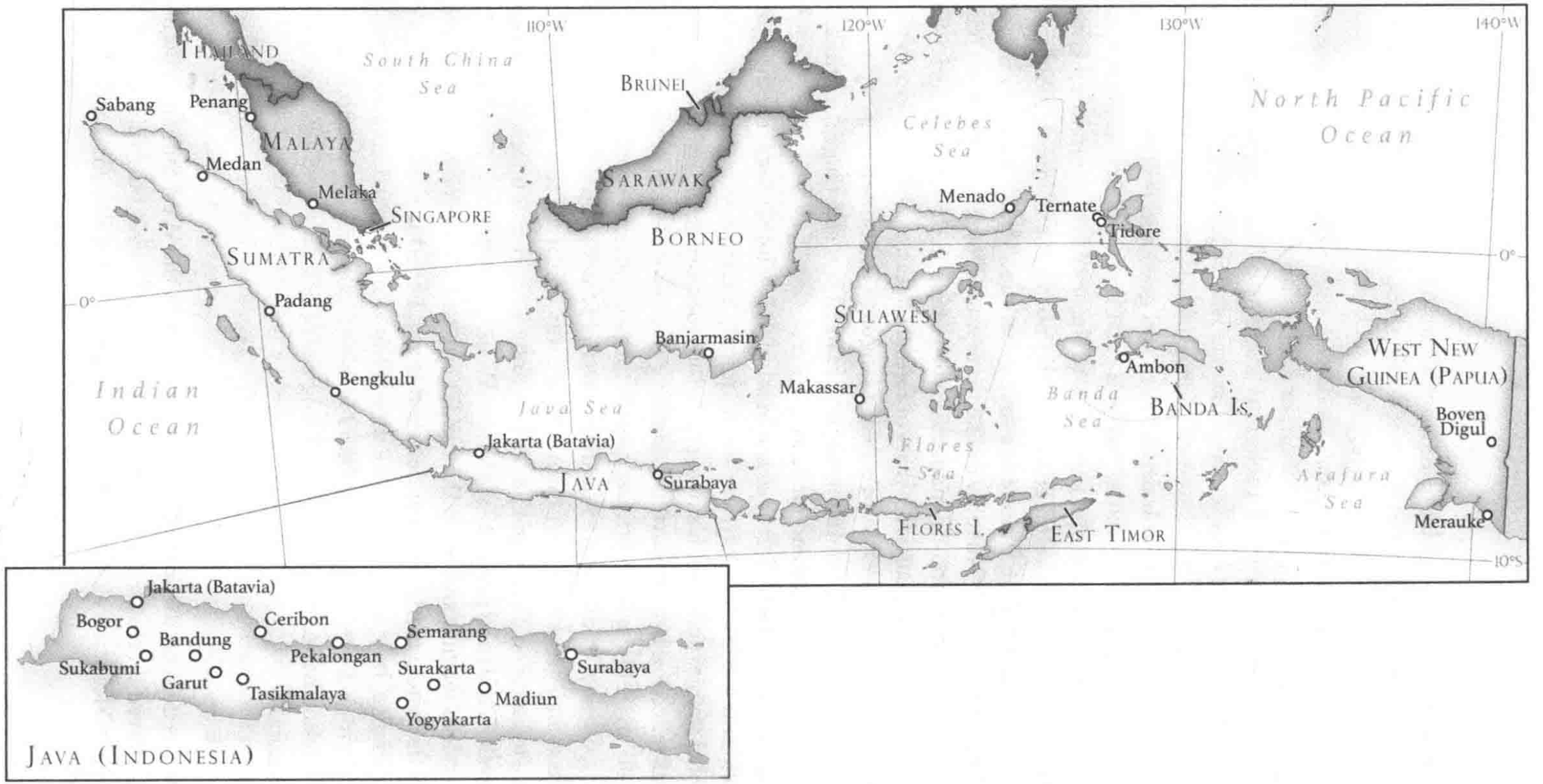
Although war briefly interrupted Hamka's writing life, by the time Indonesia became a reality in 1949 he was in full steam. Working now from Jakarta, the new national capital on Java, he rushed several books into print, one after the other. These volumes included a biography of his father, his own memoirs, studies on Islam, self-help books, travel books, and histories, not to mention new editions of his popular books of the 1930s. In these years of feverish activity, his voice became a familiar one in the discourse of the new nation as he strove passionately to make his Great Story the common story of Indonesia. This project consumed him for the next three decades, that is, for the rest of his life.

He became a prominent figure in Indonesia's tumultuous Left-Right culture wars of the 1960s and, in a final burst of writing, completed his thirty-volume commentary (or *tafsir*) on the entire Qur'an.

Hamka's exact role in Indonesia's modern formation is hard to categorize. He wasn't a traditional Muslim scholar, or *alim*, as his father had been; except for a brief period, he never led a religious academy of his own, and he never claimed to be expert in any one arena of classical Islamic learning. Nor was he a politician in the manner of Sukarno or Mohammad Hatta or the many others who actually led Indonesia to independence and governed it afterward. Nor, despite his own heartfelt yearning, was he a great literary figure; as popular as they were, his novels and stories never rose to the stature of Literature.[4] Even as a public intellectual or intelligentsia he did not fit the common mold. He was virtually alone among Indonesia's first-generation thought leaders in not being Western educated. Not only did he never learn Dutch—the sine qua non of an educated Native and of Indonesia's formative nationalist leaders—he never completed more than a few years of formal education. His window to the outside world wasn't Dutch but Arabic, a language he learned as a boy at his father's stern insistence. For the most part, Hamka was self-taught, a brilliant striver with a unique voice and range as a writer.

Hamka can best be understood as a Muslim public intellectual. He thought in public and was read widely. He wrote quickly, often working from hastily assembled sources and from his own prodigious memory and rarely pausing for cautious reflection before moving something into print. Minor corrections he left to others. This gave his writing a spontaneous, conversational quality and, at times, a naive, undisciplined quality as well. He wrote on an endless array of subjects in a great variety of forms, from pithy editorials to advice-for-life columns to essays on history and philosophy and theology plus novels and stories and traveler's tales and personal anecdotes. Week after week and year after year, in his serious writing and in all the candid bits and pieces, he revealed to his readers the whole world as he understood it and hoped it to be. In Hamka's grand narrative, Indonesians could see themselves as actors in a drama unfolding before their own eyes—the Great Story in which the thrilling possibilities of modernity and nationhood and the abiding truths of Islam were all coinciding in Indonesia.

Hamka was born on the shores of Lake Maninjau in the West Sumatran highlands and lived there as a small boy. He never tired of describing this beautiful place, where rice terraces cascade from the hillsides to the shoreline and where,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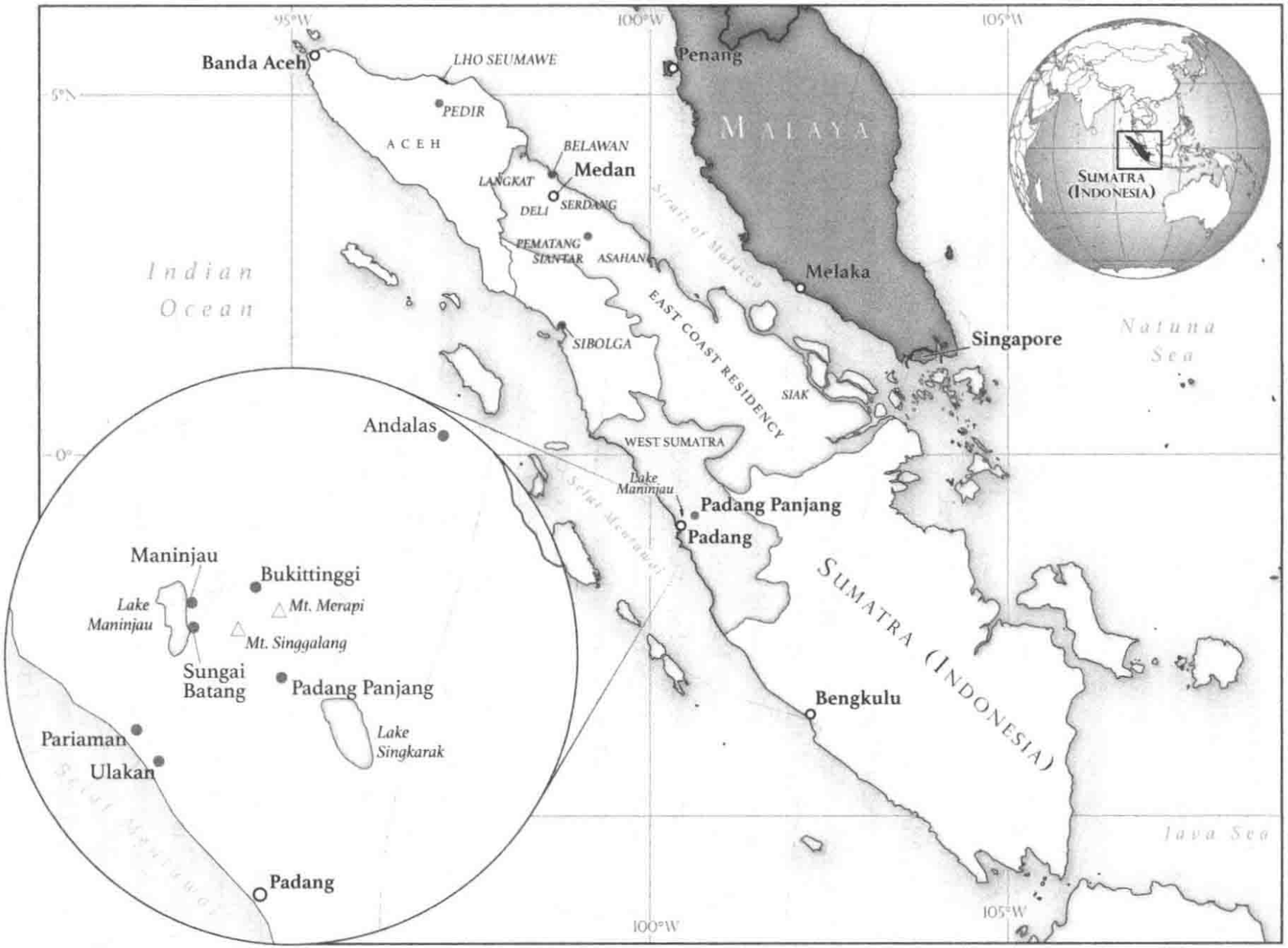
Indonesia



Sumatra, showing east and west coast residencies of the Dutch era

from the window of his simple childhood home, he could see "coconut trees swaying beside the lake, and boats crossing," and clouds forming "at the edge of the sky, blanketing the hilltops around the lake."[5] The village Tanah Sirah was part of Sungai Batang, one of several Minangkabau *negeri*, or hamlets, clustered along the lakeshore. There he was doted upon by his maternal grandparents and uncles and discovered both the warmth and the smallness of village life.[6]

Even as a boy, however, Hamka was aware that the small world of Lake Maninjau was not a place apart. Hamka's own parents were often somewhere else, in Padang Panjang, forty kilometers away, where his father, Haji Rasul (Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah, 1879–1945), taught religion and from which he roamed far and wide to teach and preach in the hamlets, towns, and cities of Sumatra. Moreover, not far from Sungai Batang, in the market town of Maninjau, resided a Dutch Controleur, a white colonial official whose unwelcome presence at the lake alongside Dutch soldiers linked it to certain powers above and beyond. Lake Maninjau and Padang Panjang and the island of Sumatra itself all constituted only a small part of Holland's great, sprawling equatorial colony, the Dutch East Indies. When Hamka moved with his father to Padang Panjang at the age of seven, he briefly attended school with children of colonial soldiers recruited from Ambon—some three thousand kilometers away and yet also part of the same huge colony. They cursed the local boys in Dutch. One of their curses, new to Hamka, was "Inlander," or Native.[7]

Hamka found his talent early. Alam Minangkabau, the world of Minangkabau, was a world of words—a world of gossip and quarrels that was rich with stories and poems, puns and proverbs, and prayers and sermons and mellifluous Arabic calls to prayer five times a day. Young Hamka—or Malik as he was known—had a gift for words. As a boy he learned hundreds of *pantun*s (Malay poems) from his maternal grandfather, mimicked the grandiose speechifying of village elders, and absorbed the proper sounds and rhythms of Qur'anic Arabic from his own father and his disciples. Malik was soon sermonizing himself. In 1925 he brought out a small magazine containing some of his practice sermons and those of his friends. This publication ran for three issues.[8]

In the mid-1920s, the Dutch East Indies favored precocious young writers like Hamka. Colonial schools for Natives, plus emerging protonationalist schools designed to counter them, were beginning to yield a small but significant body of literate people. Rising to provide newspapers, magazines, and books for these new readers, alongside a handful of Dutch and Eurasian publishers, were local city-based Chinese printers and publishers whose late nineteenth-century publications popularized a new vernacular form of Chinese-inflected

Malay.[9] In an effort to provide the right sort of reading material for its newly literate subjects, the Indies government itself in 1908 formed the Bureau for Public Reading (Commissie voor de Volkslectuur), or Balai Pustaka.[10] The Balai Pustaka published "traditional" literary works in Javanese and Sundanese, including the Mahabharata, Javanese shadow-play (or *wayang*) stories, and collections of popular proverbs and poems. It also published translations of Western works into Malay (*Pinocchio*, *The Three Musketeers*, and so on) and, increasingly after 1920, original novels by Native authors. In the process, it standardized Malay as the Indies lingua franca—the very language soon to be baptized as "Indonesian" by the colony's young activists.[11]

By the teens, a great variety of dailies and weeklies was proliferating in the Indies. In 1918 the Balai Pustaka counted sixty-seven such periodicals, forty-seven of which were in Malay.[12] Even the small world of Lake Maninjau was thoroughly penetrated by the new age of print. By 1930 it "supported at least five local newspapers."[13] In these popular periodicals, serialized novels fed a strong appetite for fiction. By 1925 the Balai Pustaka had established two thousand lending libraries across the colony and served some three hundred thousand regular borrowers. Nearly two million of its books were in circulation. Although subject to censorship and in-house editing, Balai Pustaka–published novels such as Marah Rusli's best seller *Sitti Nurbaya* gave voice to a new generation of writers who achieved celebrity (and made money) writing for and about a distinctively Indies audience. The local bookstore in Padang Panjang that Hamka visited as a boy was stocked full of such books. They left him agog with excitement and sparked his dreams.[14]

Following an impetuous pilgrimage to Mecca in 1927, Hamka seized an opportunity to write a series of exposés about it for the Chinese-owned daily *Pelita Andalas* in Medan, East Sumatra, earning money for his writing for the first time and seeing his name in print listed as "Our Special Correspondent."[15] In the issue of August 13, moreover, he signed his article H.A.M.K.A., launching the famous pen name based on his initials.[16] He had reached the age of nineteen.

The following year, Hamka published his first fiction, *Si Sabariyah* (Sabariyah [a girl's name]), a novella in the style of traditional Minangkabau tales called *kaba* in which he told the true-crime tale of a lurid murder-suicide in his own village. It was to be his only book in the Minangkabau language and in Arabic script, or *jawi.* Even his stern father liked it, he says. Reprinted three times and sung *kaba*-style by regional storytellers, it made money, too.[17] He used the proceeds for his wedding in 1929. Hamka later wrote that this early success gave him "the self-confidence and courage to keep on writing."[18]

Indeed, the very next year, Hamka published five books: a biography of Islam's first caliph, Abu Bakar; a short history of Islam in its early years; a treatise on preaching; a pamphlet called *Religion and Women*; and a polemical attack on certain Minangkabau customs as violations of true Islam—a favorite theme of his father's.[19] Although Hamka would later dismiss these early efforts as "without content," by age twenty-four he had already marked out the vast territory that would be his as a writer, a territory that embraced religious instruction, history, biography, travel, and fiction. He had also shifted permanently to Malay, the emerging language of Indies-wide discourse and nationalist activism that in 1928 delegates to the All Indonesia Youth Congress adopted as their own when they pledged themselves to "one country, one nation, and one language."[20] Malay was now Indonesian, and forever after it was Hamka's language, too. He soon became one of its modern masters.[21]

Although prolific, Hamka was not a full-time writer. After returning from the hajj, he made so little money from his articles that he was forced to take a job as a plantation religious teacher on the outskirts of Medan. Afterward, back at the lakeside, he joined his father and his brother-in-law, Sutan Mansur, in their attempt to establish in Sumatra the Java-based reform organization Muhammadiyah, whose dynamic efforts to promote Islamic modernism would soon surge throughout the Indies.[22] Hamka worked assiduously to develop his public-speaking skills and mastered the time-honored *mubaligh* circuit-preaching techniques of marshaling an argument, modulating the voice, changing pace, and mounting to a crescendo—all while standing still. By 1929 he had become a featured speaker at Muhammadiyah congresses, and he is proud to tell us in his memoirs that at the organization's twentieth congress in Yogyakarta in 1931 his speech moved the audience to tears.[23]

This success prompted his first big job. Hamka soon journeyed to the thriving Indies port city of Makassar in Sulawesi to be Muhammadiyah's chief preacher and administrator (*mubaligh pengurus besar*). This new responsibility comported completely with his personal mission in life, to use "his abilities in speaking and writing . . . to make Indonesian Muslims aware of Islam."[24] In the midst of his organizational duties, Hamka continued to write. He ventured another magazine, *Al-Mahdi*, which ran for nine issues, and in 1933 published a religious primer titled *Arkanoe'l-Iman* (Pillars of faith) in question-and-answer format. (What is the meaning of *ilmu tauhid*, or monotheism, it begins.)[25] He became a regular correspondent for the Bandung-based magazine *Pembela Islam* (Islam's defenders) and contributed to other Indies papers as well, earning welcome honorariums in return. In 1932 Hamka learned by mail that his Indonesian-language rendition of the sentimental Arab love tragedy of Laila

and Majnun (*Laila Majnun*) had been accepted by Balai Pustaka.[26] Its publication by the prestigious government publisher introduced him as an Indies writer.

After his first child's illness forced the family back home in late 1933, Hamka grew restless in Maninjau and Padang Panjang. When a letter arrived from Medan inviting him to be editor in chief of a one-year-old magazine called *Pedoman Masjarakat* (Society's compass), dedicated to "advancing knowledge and civilization based on Islam," Hamka astutely sensed the opportunity for which he had been longing. In July 1936 he left Padang Panjang for Medan, he says, finally "to be a writer."[27]

1

Society's Compass

By the mid-1930s, Medan had emerged as a city of well over seventy-seven thousand people, one of the fastest growing in the Dutch Indies.[1] From its largely Chinese business district, writes geographer Charles Robequain, "the quarters containing the big [European] business offices, administration buildings, banks, headquarters of the associations, hospitals, and private villas spread out comfortably . . . intersected by wide, shady streets."[2] The much-traveled Sumatran journalist Parada Harahap called it "the Paris of the Indies."[3]

As the commercial hub of the vibrant agribusiness economy of Sumatra's East Coast Residency and its more than 1.5 million people, Medan attracted new migrants from far and wide.[4] In outlying plantations, hundreds of thousands of Javanese "contract coolies" cleared the old-growth forest and planted, weeded, and harvested tobacco, palm oil, and rubber. All across the plantations and nearby towns, a small army of Minangkabau men plied their skills and hawked their petty wares. These men included itinerant religious teachers; Hamka himself had been one of these teachers only ten years earlier. Chinese migrants dominated shopkeeping and much of the commercial sector and constituted more than one-third of Medan's population.[5] Minangkabau, Batak, and Javanese newcomers dominated the city's nascent publishing industry, as well as most of its political and religious organizations. There were smaller numbers of Sundanese, Arabs, and Indians, as well as the native Malays, who lived under the circumscribed authority of their sultans in Deli, Langkat, Asahan, Serdang, and Siak. These erstwhile rulers led cosseted lives of conspicuous luxury "under contract" to the Dutch.[6]

In Indonesian-language publishing, Medan only trailed Batavia. It sustained three daily newspapers—including the famous *Pewarta Deli* (Deli reporter) of Djamaluddin Adinegoro—and "some of the most popular Islamic weeklies in Indonesia." These included *Pandji Islam* (Islam's banner, edited by Zainal

Abidin Ahmad) and, beginning in 1936, Hamka's *Pedoman Masjarakat* (Society's compass).[7]

In its heterogeneity, dynamism, and freedoms, Medan was like no other village. Hamka sensed the importance and excitement of the new society taking shape there and identified it explicitly as Indonesian.[8] He settled into a street of modest middle-class row houses in Kampung Jati, near the elite Dutch neighborhood and airfield in Polonia.[9] Hamka was a short man, and by the 1930s he had taken on a certain plumpness; unlike some Native urbanites, he preferred the *sarung* to trousers and always wore a black *pici* hat. (Years later, he wrote that as a teen he had been humiliated by some Dutch-educated Native youths for wearing trousers and a necktie when he couldn't speak Dutch; straightaway he gave away his Western clothes and "returned to wearing a *sarung*."[10]) In Medan he became a familiar sight, pedaling his bicycle downtown each day to the magazine's offices just off the main market.[11] In this bustling, multiethnic city, Hamka sensed opportunity. During the next six years, he worked obsessively to build his magazine and, with it, his name and reputation.

In his first issue of *Society's Compass*, Hamka promised his readers plenty of articles on religious knowledge, including Sufism, philosophy, and morality, as well as news of the Indies and the world and stories of human interest, all from an Islamic perspective.[12] He began the issue with a written homily titled "The Good Life" and then offered up news from Egypt, Yugoslavia, Iraq, and Palestine, as well as poems and anecdotes and some American and Indonesian history. Politics, he told his readers, would be covered, too, but also from a Muslim perspective: "Islam first and Indonesia second!"[13] This was exactly Muhammadiyah's stance. Even so, Hamka made his anticolonial sentiments perfectly clear in a short, unsigned article titled "Love and Blood" about the nineteenth-century hero Tuanku Imam Bondjol, who fought valiantly to ward off the Dutch colonial advance.[14] "To die . . . in struggle," the article quotes a fallen defender as saying, "means . . . to live."[15]

The subsequent issues of *Society's Compass* augmented this mix with regular features with names like "Spiritual Guidance," "Life's Mirror," "Guide to Good Behavior," and "Twists and Turns of History."[16] Hamka frequently contributed poems of his own under the name Abu Zaki (Zaki's father), one of his many pseudonyms. In issue number 3, Hamka launched the first of what would become one of the magazine's most popular features: serialized novels. In the beginning pages of *Di Bawah Lindungan Kaba'ah* (In the shelter of the Ka'ba), an unnamed narrator sketches in 1927 the links between Indonesia and Islam's Holy Lands:

> The price of rubber in Jambi and everywhere in [our] land was on the rise; the country of Mecca had just changed hands from Sharif Hussein to Ibn Sa'ud. . . . Word of peace in the Hejaz spread and, because of this, there were many who sought to fulfill Islam's fifth [pillar]. Every haji ship that departed was jammed full of hajis.
>
> They say that never before 1927 did so many people undertake the pilgrimage. . . .
>
> That was when I performed the hajj. From Belawan harbor I set sail for Jeddah aboard the *Karimata*.[17]

Every one of Hamka's readers would have remembered the rubber boom of 1927 and the pre-Great Depression prosperity of the 1920s and know Belawan as the harbor town that connected Medan and East Sumatra to the world; thus, they recognized the storyteller's voice as one of their own. Hamka himself had made the pilgrimage to Mecca in 1927 aboard the *Karimata*.[18]

Hamka wrote a great deal of each issue of *Society's Compass* himself, sometimes using pen names such as A. S. Hamid and Abu Zaki.[19] But he also tirelessly recruited other local and Indies writers and regularly published pieces by rising members of the Muslim intelligentsia such as Haji Agus Salim, Mohammad Natsir, Isa Anshary, Dr. Soetomo, and A. Hasjmy, as well as nationalist leaders Mohammad Hatta and Sukarno.[20] He regularly translated or summarized articles from Egyptian periodicals such as Cairo's *Al-Fath* and stories by the popular fictionist Musthafa Luthfi al-Manfaluthi. Indeed, streaming the content of Arabic-language books and periodicals into Indonesia became an important aspect of Hamka's popular writing.[21]

Early in his tenure Hamka acquired an invaluable partner in M. Yunan Nasution, a Muslim Batak who joined the magazine in March 1936. Nasution became a contributor, too, but served primarily as the magazine's manager, seeing to it that a new edition was ready to go to its distributors each Tuesday afternoon so that it would appear faithfully in newsstands on Wednesday.[22] The two young men—Nasution twenty-three, and Hamka twenty-eight—worked genially together day and night. They were neighbors on Jalan Teratai in Kampung Jati and often recommenced their office conversations at home in the evenings.

Recalling these early days together, Yunan Nasution portrays Hamka as a voracious reader and learner. He treasured the collection of books he brought with him to Medan. Most of the books were in Arabic, including Arabic translations of English, French, and other Western works. These books dwelled on philosophy, history, Sufism, and morality. Nasution tells us that Hamka pored

over them for uninterrupted hours at a time, often late into the night.[23] (Another friend from the same period, Buya Zas, described Hamka as reading for two to three hours at a stretch and taking notes on any scrap of paper that came to hand—such as cigarette packs—and stuffing them into his pockets.[24]) When Nasution showed Hamka a newly arrived copy of H. A. R. Gibb's *Whither Islam* (1932), Hamka promptly pulled a volume from his library shelf and said, "I already have a translation of that book in Arabic. . . . This is it."[25] Hamka also read the Singapore-based Malay daily *Utusan Melayu* and several Indies newspapers and magazines.[26] From Egypt he read the periodicals *Al-Fath*, *Al-Siyasa* of Muhammad Husayn Haykal, *Al-Risala* of Ahmad Hasan al-Zayyat, and Ahmad Amin's *Al-Thaqafa*, and he routinely combed bookstores for everything new in Arabic, thereby keeping abreast of the latest news and intellectual discussions in the Muslim heartland.[27] *Society's Compass* also received the *Haagsche Post*, most probably gleaned by Nasution, since Hamka knew very little Dutch.[28]

Hamka appeared at the office first thing in the morning but liked to do his serious writing at midday. Facing his typewriter with piles of his trusted sources lying about him, he typed at great speed, using four fingers, for in typing as in nearly everything else, Hamka was self-taught. If interrupted during such a writing spurt, he famously kept on typing and conversed tersely at the same time. When finished, he handed his manuscript to Nasution for corrections and editing and at two o'clock promptly left for home.[29]

Hamka's speed as a writer accounted in part for his remarkable productivity. He also possessed a prodigious memory. (Even forty-five years later his son Rusydi, who was a little boy during the Medan years, was still scratching his head in frustration at how quickly his father could write.[30]) Speed also influenced the hurried and sometimes careless character of his work. When his popular magazine articles were later republished as books they had to be "corrected, revised, and improved" beforehand, work that often fell to Nasution.[31] Even the published books were full of inconsistently spelled words and names, incorrect citations, and factual errors.[32] In his introduction to his collected articles on Sufism—the to-be-famous *Modern Sufism*—Hamka apologized to readers for such mistakes and for neglecting to provide the proper citations to important Hadith, admitting frankly that this "takes a lot of time."[33] In Hamka's writing, exuberance and a winning, confident style outweighed scholarly caution. Although some of his erudite fellow writers and *ulama*s (Muslim religious scholars) criticized him for these tendencies, his readers clearly did not.[34] *Society's Compass* grew in circulation from five hundred to five thousand under his leadership and was read in towns and cities throughout Sumatra, Java, Sulawesi,

Kalimantan, and Maluku, with Hamka's own articles and serialized stories driving its growing popularity.[35]

The content of *Society's Compass* reflected Hamka's own catholic curiosity about all things in the world and was remarkably international. He and Nasution reported on current events in Europe, charting Hitler's rise and engaging the dialogue about rising Fascism and its consequences. And they kept their readers abreast of new developments in the Muslim world, such as Ataturk's puzzling reforms in Turkey. (In May 1936 the magazine published a list of ten "Do Nots" for women in Turkey, including no lipstick, no nail polish, no high heels, and so on. Since this seemed to contradict Turkey's famous secularization policies, the magazine commented: "Strange, no?"[36])

The late 1930s crisis in Palestine was much on the editors' minds. Hamka presented the Zionist occupation of the territory in terms readers could easily understand. The new homeland for Jews was a colonial creation in much the same way as the Dutch East Indies was. Britain's overwhelming imperial power was making it possible. Now, he wrote in September 1936, "people from all corners of the earth who have resided in those places [*negeri*] for hundreds of generations possess a homeland in Palestine, and the inhabitants of Palestine themselves—who have prospered and farmed and shed their blood there—have become squatters."[37] Hamka subtly used language to imply kinship between Indonesians and Palestinians; the expression *bersawah dan berladang* (loosely, to farm with wet rice paddies and adjacent vegetable and fruit gardens) suggests a particularly Indonesian or Southeast Asian type of farming and, poetically, conjures a powerful image of village and home.

From the Cairo newspaper *Al-Fath*, Hamka offered the true story of a young Palestinian truck driver from Jerusalem. "Our friend," he says, has lost everything but his truck in the wake of the British occupation and subsequent Arab boycott called by Said Muhammad Amin al-Husayni, the grand mufti of Jerusalem. Palestine is deluged with English and Sikh soldiers and with armored cars and machine guns; bombers fly overhead. Our friend has no work and no money to feed his wife and children. When pressured by the British to volunteer his truck as a troop carrier in a reprisal raid, he at first demurs. But when he remembers al-Husayni's exhortation to "give your soul, your blood . . . Palestine asks it," he agrees and then drives his truck full of British soldiers off a cliff, killing twelve of them plus himself. The story ends with a reassuring passage from the Qur'an. "Do not think of those who have been killed in God's way as dead. They are alive with their Lord, well provided for."[38]

In discussing the fate of Palestine, *Society's Compass* naturally addressed the role of Jews and Zionists, including the plight of Jewish refugees from Hitler's

Germany. And whereas Zionists and wealthy American Jews are depicted as the true movers behind the creation of the Jewish homeland in Palestine (e.g., in an article by Haji Agus Salim), Hamka reminded his readers that curses against the Jews in the Qur'an must be understood historically and that before the Prophet Muhammad's revelation, Jews were God's chosen people.[39] The weekly also noted, given the dire predicament of many contemporary Jews in Europe, that rumors and myths about their influence with the Great Powers could not possibly be true.[40]

What *was* true was Germany's startling rise in Europe. Hamka kept his readers informed about Hitler's advances and Fascism's sudden ascendancy, treating the subjects regularly in the weekly's section titled World Upheaval. At first, Hamka and Nasution were inclined to be somewhat sympathetic to Germany for its humiliation at the end of World War I—humiliation being something that colonized Muslims understood viscerally the world over—and also because Europe's misfortunes might help weaken the world's great colonial powers (ironically, the Western democracies) and provide breathing room for national independence movements in Muslim societies.[41] "Has the moment arrived," *Society's Compass* asked its readers in May 1936, "when the Eastern World will seize back the reins of propriety and social leadership?"[42] But as time went on and news from Europe became ever more alarming—until May 1940, when Germany invaded Holland itself and the Indies were placed under martial law—Hamka and other *Society's Compass* contributors were increasingly repulsed by Fascism. In May 1940, in open sympathy with Holland, Hamka published in both Indonesian and English the patriotic World War I war poem by the Canadian John McCrae, "In Flanders Fields":

> Take up our quarrel with the foe:
> To you from failing hands we throw
> The Torch; be yours to hold on high![43]

The following issue, in the featured column The Muslim World of June 5, 1940, the magazine described the Nazi philosophy of racial superiority and triumph of the strong as "profoundly opposed to Muslim beliefs."[44] Three issues later, Hamka published a plea by the Indonesian nationalist icon Dr. Cipto Mangunkusumo, who wrote from exile that, Holland's violation of democracy in its colonies notwithstanding, Indonesians will be better off if "democracy" wins. We should be noble to our Dutch foes and not tread upon them when they're weak, Cipto said.[45] And in December 1940 Hamka editorialized that even the modest gains we have made to "stand on our own" will be lost if the dictators win.[46]

"To stand on our own"—this was the great hope of Hamka's generation and one that he had embraced as a youth. Minangkabau had been an early cauldron of the nationalist movement, and Hamka's father's students were early acolytes of the cause. Some of them had joined the precipitous Communist-led rebellion of 1927, which led in turn to a police-state chill in the late 1920s and 1930s, when Holland's anxious colonial masters sent the too radical and the too vocal into exile and, through its indigenous officials and spies, kept a watchful eye on local stirrings. Haji Rasul, a chronic troublemaker, was a frequent object of their concern. So was the young Hamka himself, who appeared in Dutch intelligence reports as early as 1928, when he was twenty.[47]

In this climate, many confirmed nationalists learned to tread a fine line as they debated the wisdom and integrity of "cooperating" versus "not cooperating." These debates became passionate as Sukarno's Indonesian Nationalist Party (Partai Nasionalis Indonesia, PNI) emerged as the leading noncooperating party and as other parties formed and splintered around rival leaders, cultural-regional-religious orientations, and calculations of benefit and risk.[48] Muhammadiyah's leaders adopted a policy of placing Islam first and politics second, a policy that Hamka also asserted in launching *Society's Compass*, as we have seen.[49] By doing so and, at the same time, by maintaining an "anticolonial attitude and . . . open sympathy with the cause of Indonesian nationalism," the organization made great strides in advancing Islam-centered education and social services and expanding its own organizational presence in the islands—a presence in which Hamka was directly involved in Minangkabau, Makassar, and Medan, where he served as the organization's senior leader, or consul.[50] These achievements played an important part in forming a nascent "Indonesia" within the shell of the Dutch Indies.[51] This Indonesia-in-the-making is present in virtually every issue of *Society's Compass.* By the mid-1930s it had emerged as a core theme of Hamka's Great Story.

Hamka affirmed this emphasis in a resounding statement launching the weekly's fourth year in January 1940: "And as members of a nationality, that is, as sons of Indonesia, we shall use our magazine to the benefit of [our] beloved people and country, Indonesia."[52] On several occasions, he wrote later in his memoirs, he had been summoned to appear before the Dutch authorities and threatened because of his magazine's insinuating articles.[53] These may have included stories about the colony's most famous political prisoners and exiles. Readers of *Society's Compass* learned in February 1936, for example, that Sutan Sjahrir and Mohammad Hatta had been transferred from the notorious New Guinea camp for political prisoners at Boven Digul to Banda Neira, Hatta

bringing with him fifteen cases of books![54] In March 1938 Sukarno himself had been shifted from Flores Island to Bengkulu in Sumatra: "We congratulate him on this move."[55]

These nationalist leaders appeared in *Society's Compass* as figures of respect and authority. In August 1936 Hamka deftly captured Sukarno's popular appeal by describing the way Indonesian audiences responded to his speeches with torrents of applause and cries of "Life to Bung Karno. *Hidup!*"[56] Hamka also took pains to present Sukarno as a good Muslim and occasionally published Sukarno's articles about Islam, including "Propaganda Islam in Jail" in March 1938.[57] Indeed, *Society's Compass* regularly featured articles by Sukarno and by Hatta and other figures with clear nationalist identities, such as Mohammad Natsir and Haji Agus Salim, validating their authority without conspicuously embracing everything they advocated.[58] "We have great respect for Sukarno as a thinker," it editorialized in 1940. "But we can't yet accept all of his ideas and proposals—just as we cannot reject all of them."[59]

In February 1939 Hamka printed an announcement by the founder of the Islam Party of Indonesia (Partai Islam Indonesia, PII), Wiwoho Poerbohadidjojo, who urged Indonesian Muslims to embrace politics, saying, "Those who do not engage in politics will be swallowed up by politics," adding that, these days, the political atmosphere in Indonesia is "dark as night."[60] As if to verify this opinion, Hamka carried reports of harassment by colonial police and authorities, events that sometimes struck close to home. Dutch authorities confiscated a book written by his brother in 1938—including copies belonging to Hamka himself—and in June 1940 the magazine reported that its own M. Yunan Nasution had been shoved and manhandled by a Dutch police inspector while attempting to cover a political party meeting.[61]

Subsequent articles in the same year asked, "Is Netherlands India (DEI) a Police State?," joining a lively public debate about an article by a French critic of Dutch colonial policies.[62] At the same time, *Society's Compass* offered robust support for the proposal of prominent "cooperators" Husni Thamrin and Amir Sjarifuddin and others affiliated with the Indonesian Political Federation (Gabungan Politik Indonesia, GAPI)—which brought together most of the colony's nationalist organizations in 1939—to call for an elected Indonesian parliament in return for support to Holland in the now-anticipated war. Hamka wrote that parliamentary governance had been a goal of Islam "since the time of Abu Bakar, Umar, Usman, and Ali," its founding leaders following the Prophet Muhammad.[63] By endorsing the proposed parliament in this way, Hamka adhered to his oft-repeated promise, first and foremost, to root *Society's*

Compass in Islam. At the same time, he kept his magazine and its readers in tune with current political developments in the Indies and guided their responses to them.

Hamka fleshed out *Society's Compass* with poems—such as A. Hasjmy's "Marriage . . . for young people" (message: don't rush into things!)—and with anecdotes about prominent Indonesian figures.[64] A favorite was Haji Agus Salim's conversation with a Dutch official who disparaged Indonesian as a language with a weak vocabulary and thus unsuitable to be the language of the Indies Volksraad (People's Council). "Show me a word for 'politics' in Indonesian," he said, alluding to the fact that Indonesians had borrowed the term *politik* from the Dutch *politiek*. "First," replied Haji Agus Salim, "please try to translate the word 'politics' into your own language."[65] Hamka also answered questions such as: Is margarine *halal*, that is, is it appropriate for a Muslim to eat? Yes, according to studies in Dutch laboratories.[66] And, is homosexuality really wrong? Yes, the Qur'an expressly forbids it. But there may be extenuating circumstances—in prisons, aboard ships, on army bases—and we certainly know of people in Muslim history who were homosexuals, reminding readers in passing that Minangkabau slang for homosexual was *anak Djawi*, referring explicitly to youths who study Arabic.[67]

In *Society's Compass*, Hamka noted again and again the stunting impact on Islam and its people of blind allegiance to outdated teachings and the failure of Muslims to use their God-given intellects to stay abreast of the times and improve themselves. This marked him as a modernist. He illustrated this problem with examples of irrelevant urgencies—such as the debate about whether or not Jesus (Isa) was dead or alive and, if alive, whether his body was in heaven or just his soul.[68] Some things done in the name of Islam, he concluded, were simply stupid. In December 1940, for example, he reported about the *ulama* who advised the sultan of Siak—whose nearby small kingdom existed under Dutch "protection"—that money donated by the Dutch government from the rubber excise tax was *haram* (forbidden to Muslims) and could not be used to build or repair mosques. As a result, the Catholics of Siak now possessed a beautiful new church built with money generated by Muslim rubber-plantation workers. "It's this kind of narrow thinking that has caused us to lose our way in many things; [our] steps toward a modern way of life, economy, industry, even our social and religious good works are often narrow."[69]

In contrast, *Society's Compass* embraced the progress of the modern world. The weekly magazine's masthead featured a pen-and-ink drawing of the New York skyline, the Eiffel Tower, and the U.S. Capitol; a multi-chimneyed,

"Hamka was known everywhere." Hamka as editor of *Pedoman Masjarakat* (Society's compass), ca. 1939. Pusat Dokumentasi Sastra H. B. Jassin.

smoke-bellowing factory and a majestic steamship; and a car and train and plane and even a blimp in motion. Off to the side, one could see a large mosque and two Indonesian houses with distinctive upturned Minangkabau roofs and, in the middle, a compass. This is the modern world that we are part of, the picture proclaimed. Islam is our guide.[70]

Society's Compass moved in the spirit of the times. By 1940 its weekly circulation had jumped to five thousand, making it one of the largest in the Indies, and Hamka had achieved a certain fame as a popular writer. H. B. Jassin, later Indonesia's leading literary critic but at the time a high school student in Medan, recalled that it "was one of the most popular magazines in the Indies" and that "Hamka was known everywhere."[71] He was also a senior leader of Muhammadiyah in East Sumatra and one of Medan's conspicuous public figures, capable of drawing huge crowds to his sermons and speeches. He was certain to be on hand for visiting dignitaries and important public events.[72] In the bustling, prosperous, "Indonesian" (but still colonial) city of Medan, Hamka made his name.

Happiness

Hamka was attracted to intellectuals and was himself a member of Medan's *kaum intelek*, or intellectual community. For several years, he was active in a salon called Ichwanus Safa that brought together Medan's *ulama*s and intellectuals for monthly meetings. However, the people who loved his magazine and his books were not generally intellectuals or religious scholars at all but fellow self-improvers and religious strivers among the colony's increasingly literate urbanites.[73] A great many of them had completed only elementary school.[74] These earnest learners turned to him for guidance about how to live as good Muslims and about what it was that was important to know. By meeting their needs—and despite criticism in some circles that he was an overconfident lightweight—he became a trusted popular authority.

Beginning in 1937, under the regular column *Tasauf Modern* (Modern Sufism), Hamka explored the problem of happiness. He embarked on this famous series at the request of a reader and fellow Muhammadiyah *mubaligh* (preacher), Oei Tjeng Hien (Abdul Karim Oei), and pursued it in response to repeated requests from readers for more.[75] Writing feverishly week to week, Hamka introduced them to the classical teachings of Aristotle, the greats from the Muslim canon (from al-Ghazali to Ibn Arabi to Ibn Taymiya, Ibn Khaldun, and al-Junaid to the modernists Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, and Rashid Rida), and finally contemporary Western thinkers.[76] Writing as a

religious authority, he sought always to root his main points in the Qur'an and the Hadith.

The result was not a disciplined argument but a discursive ramble—an autodidact's tour de force—through every aspect of human happiness that Hamka could think of or look up in his ever-handy reference books. He later confessed in the first book edition of *Modern Sufism* that he had made copious use of books by experts in Sufism and philosophy plus the Qur'an and Hadith, not to mention several Western writers (whose work he read in Arabic), taking "a little from here and a little from there and then combining [all of this] with my own thoughts, experiences, and sufferings."[77] On any given page readers might meet Ibn Khaldun or al-Ghazali or George Bernard Shaw or Tolstoy. In one paragraph we are in the early centuries of Islam, in the next in contemporary Sumatra. A topic that began in chapter 2 might reappear in chapter 7 and again later. Moreover, Hamka could not resist the occasional pithy aside or poem or proverb—like the Minangkabau *nan lahir pedoman nan batin* (the outside points to what's inside)—and neither could his readers, evidently.[78] One could be lost among the trees. In time, however, Hamka's many trees coalesced into a forest. The result was a fresh interpretation of Sufism, or mysticism, nested within the big ideas of modernist Islam.

Sufism was a vexed subject in Indonesia because so many of the "old ways" that Muslim reformers and modernists railed against—including mystical brotherhoods and magic and charms and heretical notions about being "one with God"—were popularly associated with Sufism. Hamka's articles stressed instead the positive contribution of Sufism to Islam's understanding of God and the human experience. In doing so, he moved Sufism from a stigmatized periphery back to the mainstream.[79] At the same time, he used his lessons on happiness to stress some of the key points of modern Muslim thinking—among them that God calls upon followers to live in the world, not apart from it, and also to use their minds. The more vigorously and wholeheartedly you do these two things, Hamka told his readers, the happier you will be. Indeed, the better off we will *all* be.

Hamka called his "happiness" column and the book that followed *Modern Sufism* in part because Sufi philosophers had taken such an interest in happiness—as opposed, for example, to experts in the fields of law (*fiqh*). But he also sought to use the example of Sufism, or mysticism, to drive home another important argument of the modernists. Muslims themselves were to blame for falling into decline and political subjugation during the past few hundred years as the West rose to global dominance, causing, among other things, Hamka and his readers to become subjects of the Dutch.

Sufism, he argued, arose centuries ago during a period when the original austere Islam of Arabia and the Prophet expanded into the new cultural realms of Persia, North Africa, and Spain. The great power and riches of the Abbasid court (750–935) at Baghdad under Harun al-Rashid and others fostered a cultural renaissance and the rise of Islam's first philosophers and mystics, or Sufis. The original Sufis were devout searchers who withdrew themselves from the tedious, too-clever religious debates of the day and the ostentation of Abassid court society to seek God and inner peace—and, as Hamka puts it, to combat "lust, the material world, and Satan"—through solitude and acts of religious devotion.[80]

Over time, however, the Sufis went too far, "slipping away from Islam" and even forbidding themselves things that God permits, such as seeking a livelihood and owning property.[81] In their self-absorbed isolation, Hamka wrote, Sufis turned their backs on worldly confusions and disturbances, disdained government, and lost themselves in "the deliciousness of Sufi solitude."[82] This posture of withdrawal and otherworldliness, wrote Hamka, helped explain why the Islamic world stood weak before the invading Mongols in the thirteenth century. The legacy of this sort of Sufism has come down to us in images of emaciated ascetics—"as thin and dry as wood in the desert"—wearing self-consciously simple clothing and setting themselves apart from ordinary people in order to cleanse their hearts.[83]

"This sort of Sufism does not arise from the teachings of Islam," wrote Hamka.[84] The true spirit of Islam, he concluded, is "the spirit of struggle, sacrifice, and work," of pursuing a livelihood, enjoying life's lawful pleasures, and joining the struggle for justice and other lofty goals in society.[85] Fortunately, one can cleanse one's heart without wearing strange clothing and withdrawing from the world or without joining one of the Sufi brotherhoods (*tarekat*) familiar to Indonesians, replete with secret rites and rules, esoteric knowledge, and the authority of *shaykh*s.[86] As early as the tenth century, the Sufi philosopher al-Junaid taught that true Sufism was not about the pursuit of oneness with God in isolation from society but about becoming a better person *in* society. "Sufism," he said, "is abandoning shameful behavior for commendable behavior."[87] In this sense, anyone can practice Sufism. Al-Junaid's centuries-old insight is a key to reformulating Sufism for modern Muslims, Hamka wrote, and also a key to happiness.

Another key is intellect. One of the most beautiful prayers in the Qur'an is "Lord, increase me in knowledge!"[88] Indeed, Hamka wrote, the Qur'an is full of passages enjoining people to use their intellects vigorously, to think and to learn. This applies to the natural world of the earth and stars—to science, in

other words—as well as to matters of religion and to seeking the truth of the Qur'an and Hadith. Islam has no priesthood, he reminded his readers; individual Muslims are free to study and interpret the scriptures. They are free to think. The failure of Muslims to use their intellects (alongside the passivity fostered by the Sufis) following centuries of glittering civilization and intellectual achievements led them to fall headlong into decline. As Muslims wallowed in self-imposed ignorance, following their *ulama*s blindly century after century, the West harnessed its free intellect to bring about the modern scientific and industrial revolutions—based upon knowledge that was once the province of Muslims! As a result, all the modern inventions now present in Medan—from electricity and trains and planes and automobiles to the machines for threshing rice, sorting tobacco, and printing, cutting, and folding newspapers—came from the West.[89]

In Islam's dark days, then, so-called religious experts monopolized knowledge, and people followed them blindly, never questioning. In Arabic, this sort of unquestioning acceptance is called *taklid*.[90] To Hamka—and to reformers such as the Egyptian Muhammad Abduh, whose ideas Hamka was streaming to Indonesian readers—*taklid* was a great wrong. He compared the *ulama*s who insisted on blind acceptance to asses that carry holy books on their back without understanding them or, indeed, without even knowing they are books. And he satirized unquestioning believers as Pak Taklid or Pak Turut—"Mr. Follow," who would become a familiar figure of scorn in Hamka's subsequent writing. Ignorance, he wrote, citing the Prophet himself, is "the cruelest form of slavery."[91]

The Prophet taught that "perfect happiness arises from the perfection of the intellect."[92] Indeed, in all aspects of life, use of the mind leads to something better. "The broader one's intellect," wrote Hamka, "the broader one's life, and the broader one's life, the greater one's happiness."[93] One reason that a vigorous intellect leads to happiness is that an intelligent, thinking person will naturally be drawn to God, will perceive the beauty and intricacy of God's creations, and will submit willingly to God's guidance. Thus, faith or belief will steer intelligent humans away from such evils as tyranny, betrayal, greed, and dishonesty and toward the good. Even in matters of faith and good works, those with better minds will shine.[94]

Living in the world, developing one's mind, abiding in the faith: when people do these things they find not only personal happiness but greater happiness in society at large. Hamka had evidently been reading about Tolstoy, and he included a long passage on Tolstoy's view of personal happiness and its connection to happy societies. If everyone followed the Golden Rule—to love others as oneself—the world would be peaceful, people would thrive in orderly

societies, churches and mosques would be full, there would be peace among all classes of people, and there would be no bloodshed. Tolstoy's view comports with the teachings of Islam, which assure us that we humans, all of us, are bound by "the rope of God," citing the famous Qur'anic image.[95]

All of this matters to us Indonesians, he wrote, because we are responsible, indeed, we are accountable to God, for the society we make. We have been humiliated and subjected to rule by non-Muslims, our culture has been damaged, our people are poor—and it is hard for poor people to do the right thing. So, he said, we should harness our faith and our brains to bring progress to our people and our country and to claim a respected place for ourselves in the world as Muslims.[96]

In key passages of *Modern Sufism*, Hamka addresses other character traits essential to the happiness of self and society. These include sincerity, honesty, moderation, resoluteness, and even being neat, tidy, and fit.[97] However, next to intellect and faith, the characteristic looming largest in Hamka's exhortation to his fellow Muslims of the Dutch East Indies was the will to act (*iradah*).[98] It is not enough to believe. One must act on one's faith, one must apply one's intellect to do good. A believer needs will to overcome his or her baser instincts—to gain control over the self—and also to strive for the good in society by taking action against the bad.[99]

Striving for the good of society was at the heart of Hamka's concerns as he surveyed the world around him in the Dutch East Indies and the dreamed-for Indonesia. Islam, he said, can equip us to strive wisely and lead us to become a better, happier people. Islam itself is society's compass.

In emphasizing the role of reason and intellect in Islam, Hamka was offering nothing new. This vein of thinking had emerged among Muslim intellectuals as early as the eighth century among the Mutazilites, rationalists who dominated Islamic thought in the later years of the Umayyad caliphate in Iraq. More conservative clerics subsequently declared this school of reason-driven theology heretical and taught that God and God's intentions for humankind must be apprehended only through revelation. This was a major teaching of the Ash'ariyya school that became dominant among Sunnis.[100] Its guardians resisted new interpretations of the Qur'an and Hadith and eventually forbade—or closed the door to—*ijtihad*, which is precisely the application of human reason to solving religious problems. An important exception was the Hanbali reformer Ibn Taymiya (1263–1328). Although a theological opponent of the Mutazilites, he promoted independent thinking, railed against *taklid*, and taught that the door to *ijtihad* should be open. Hamka greatly admired him. Ibn Taymiya's teachings inspired modern reformers such as al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh,

and Rashid Rida, who claimed to be followers of Islam's righteous forebears or elders, the *al-salaf al-salih*, or Salafis. They insisted, and Hamka passionately agreed, that for Islam to rise again, Muslims must harness their God-given intellects.[101]

Hamka's mentors belonged to the first generation of modernist reformers in the Dutch East Indies. They included his own father, Haji Rasul, and his brother-in-law Sutan Mansur. The reform-oriented organization they helped to establish was Muhammadiyah, in which Hamka himself was already a leader by the 1930s. So in suffusing his own religious writings such as *Modern Sufism* with a passionate appeal to think and to learn—to rationality—one might say that Hamka was merely adopting a popular trend. This is more or less what he later said about himself: "I have merely stood astride my times, nothing more or less."[102] Yet, for Hamka, this was not merely theology. As a largely self-educated young man rising in life as a popular writer, he believed it with his whole heart.

The positive message of *Modern Sufism* struck a chord. Hamka's readers expressed their gratefulness in letters and, later, in 1939, when Hamka published the series as a book, by buying it in such volume that it repeatedly sold out and eventually ran to multiple editions.[103] Hamka followed his series on happiness with others in the same vein on the themes of living, responsibility, and morality (or good character), all of which appeared as books by 1940.[104]

An Indies Storyscape

Despite his growing reputation as a popular authority on religious matters, Hamka did not aspire to become an august religious scholar, or *alim*, such as his father. He dreamed instead of becoming a revered *pujangga*, a bard and literary lion for his country-to-be. Side by side with his mini-lessons on happiness, life, and responsibility, Hamka offered his readers stories. He himself became an avid fan of the Egyptian writer Musthafa Luthfi al-Manfaluthi, whose original novels and translations of French-language works into Arabic were immensely popular. Hamka translated some of Manfaluthi's stories into Indonesian for publication in *Society's Compass* and borrowed ideas from Manfaluthi in constructing his own novels (and in one famous case more or less a complete plot).[105] Again taking "a little from here and a little from there," Hamka found stories all around him, including the American and European movies he watched obsessively at Medan's Rex Bioscoop.[106]

Hamka opened his first serialized novel in *Society's Compass* with a passage recalling the memorable hajj of 1927. In *Dibawah Lindungan Ka'bah* (In the

shelter of the Ka'ba), a young man of limited means, Hamid, is thwarted in his love for the daughter of his wealthy benefactor and dies heartbroken in Mecca. The story of Hamid and his sweetheart, Zainab, plays out against the backdrop of Dutch colonial schools in Padang and Muslim academies in Padang Panjang (of the kind that Hamka knew well) and against the Muslim ritual calendar of pilgrimage, fasting, and daily prayers. Readers hear the entire story through the reminiscences of Hamid's fellow hajis and are reassured, at the end, that Hamid had completed his hajj before dying in the shelter of the Ka'ba. This short novel prefigured many to follow in its critique of social values—Hamid's low social status makes him unacceptable to Zainab's family—and also in its frank sentimentality. In *In the Shelter of the Ka'ba*, Zainab dies, too, exactly the sort of sad ending Hamka's readers learned to anticipate.

In April 1938 Hamka launched the first episode of his novel *Tenggelamnya Kapal* van der Wijck (The sinking of the *van der Wijck*). Using a plot from Manfaluthi's translation of a French novel (Alphonse Karr's *Sous les tilleuls* [Under the lindens], 1832), Hamka unfolded the story of Zainuddin, whose mixed Minangkabau-Makassarese parentage leaves him ethnically ambiguous and unsuitable for his great love, Hayati, a high-status Minangkabau girl—this despite his good-heartedness and talent and adherence to Muslim values. In Zainuddin, Hamka created a true "Indonesian" character who finds meaning and success in the colony's burgeoning multiethnic cities, especially Surabaya. Like Hamka himself, Zainuddin chooses a life in writing and achieves fame. But Hayati marries someone else, and her moment of regret comes far too late. Her feckless husband commits suicide, and before she can be reunited with Zainuddin, she dies in a shipwreck. In despair, Zainuddin wastes away, and, a year later, he dies, too.

Zainuddin and Hayati and their friends in *The Sinking of the* van der Wijck are modern young people who grapple with the new freedoms of life outside the village. Readers of *Society's Compass* identified with them. Hamka was striking a chord.

Between 1936 and 1942, Hamka published six novels and several short stories, most of which appeared first on the pages of *Society's Compass*. He wrote these stories as entertainments and relied on them to sell his magazine and to supplement his income. Moving his serialized stories quickly into books, Hamka helped to fuel the lively Indies market for cheap novels, a market increasingly fed by private presses.[107] He became a featured writer for the Medan-based publisher Joesoef Sou'yb, who brought out his *Tuan Director* (Mr. Director) and *Merantau ke Deli* (Migrating to Deli) alongside popular detective stories by others, such as *Serikat Thé Gelap* (The black market tea

syndicate) and *Rahasia Mantal Biroe* (Secret of the blue cape).[108] Meanwhile, the Social Novel series (Roman Pergaulan) of Bukittinggi, which otherwise published books such as *Mystery Man: The Man from Singapore* (Misteri man [Orang dari Singapore]) and *Spion Perempuan* (Girl spy), published Hamka's *Angkatan Baroe* (The new generation) in 1939. In December of that year, Sou'yb featured Hamka's name first in a brochure touting his leading authors.[109] Hamka became so well known for his novels that, in Medan, disapproving people behind his back (and children openly) called him "Haji Roman" (Haji Novel) and "Ulama van der Wijck."[110]

Hamka took pride in his ability to move people with his stories, which are full of sad moments. As he composed the final chapter of *The Sinking of the* van der Wijck, killing off the novel's star-crossed lovers, Hamka broke into tears himself.[111] Yet Hamka took story writing seriously. And even if his sentimental, melodramatic stories did not generally impress members of the Indies' literary intelligentsia, they certainly found a ready audience among the colony's eager readers and among the wider audience of people who couldn't read but were happy to be read to or simply to hear the stories retold in coffee shops and at home.[112] For them, Hamka created a familiar yet compelling "storyscape" in which they could at once find themselves and, at the same time, be touched and made larger by the stories of others.

The characters in Hamka's stories dwelled in the familiar environs of the Dutch East Indies. Only in the first, *In the Shelter of the Ka'bah*, do they venture outside the colony at all—on the pilgrimage to Mecca. His characters were more likely to find themselves in the familiar surroundings of Minangkabau villages and towns such as Padang Panjang and Bukittinggi and in the Sumatran colonial entrepôts of Padang and Medan and the nearby plantation area around Deli. Hamka and his readers knew these places well, either by direct experience or through the travelers' tales of friends and relatives on the move. When the stories moved farther afield, they ventured to Makassar in Sulawesi or to Java and its major cities of Surabaya and Batavia—all within the confines of Holland's far-flung colony and the protonation of Indonesia. In *Mr. Director* of 1939, for example, set in Surabaya, we learn that traders from Palembang, Bandung, Tasikmalaya, Garut, Banjarmasin, Banjar, and even Maluku and Banda flocked to the city.[113] And in *The Sinking of the* van der Wijck, the hero Zainuddin's itinerary from Makassar to Padang Panjang is spelled out precisely for readers: Makassar, Surabaya, Semarang, Batavia, Bengkulu, Padang, and finally Padang Panjang.[114]

By stressing these Indies-wide and Indies-bounded traffic patterns, Hamka reminded his readers of the size and diversity of Indonesia: "our country—our

land and water."[115] Hamka reinforced the image of this geo-body in *Society's Compass* by illustrating a column titled "National Matters" with a sketch map of the archipelago showing only the Dutch-held territories, that is, precisely the nation-to-be.[116]

Hamka's storyscape, then, reflected a world his readers knew, a world where time was marked by Islam's five daily prayers and where even the discreet rendezvous of the young sweethearts, Zainuddin and Hayati, in *The Sinking of the* van der Wijck occurred against the sound of a distant village prayerhouse drum "accompanied by a peaceful voice. . . . *Hayya alal falaaah* [hasten toward salvation]."[117] Men smoked cigarettes as they worked and talked—as Hamka himself did—and people relished mangoes and bananas and fish and rice and larded their talk with pithy sayings from the rich canon of Malay and Minangkabau poems and proverbs: "The rice has already cooked to mush [*Nasi sudah menjadi bubur*]," Hamka notes about petty trader Leman's sinking fortunes in *Migrating to Deli*. "It's too late."[118] This world of familiar beauty yields images of verdant hills and plains, villages and farms, and of everyday rural life in a setting of natural grandeur. Here is Hamka describing a West Sumatran sunrise in *The Sinking of the* van der Wijck: "Not long afterward, before sunlight reached the land and the main road winding through the small hamlets from Padang Panjang to Sumpur, it struck the peaks of Mount Merapi and Mount Singgalang—beautifully, like gilding them with lovely gold. At that moment, the country people could be seen emerging from their homes blanketed in *sarung*s, the women in prayer robes carrying water gourds. Soon, the sun came up."[119]

Despite such timeless images, Hamka's storyscape depicted a world in motion, a world being transformed by the powerful forces of colonialism and capitalism. The characters in Hamka's stories live far below the lofty Dutch, who appear rarely. The only one to live in proximity to the Dutch in all of Hamka's stories is Mariah of *Terusir* (Cast out), who for a time serves as a maid in the household of the kindly van Oosts. Even so, Hamka's characters live consciously in a world created by the Dutch. The father of Zainuddin in *The Sinking of the* van der Wijck, for example, had been convicted of a crime in a Dutch court and transported in chains to Sulawesi, where he witnessed the Dutch conquest of Bone and the Kingdom of Goa.[120] The old Dutch East India Company fort in Makassar, near which Zainuddin sits and broods as the novel begins, had been the place where the Dutch exiled the defeated Javanese prince Diponegoro, who had raised an army against them in the 1820s.[121] In most of Hamka's stories, the Dutch are just offstage, appearing for brief cameos, as the van Oosts do, or the Dutch police officer who arrives to arrest Indonesian

troublemakers in *Mr. Director*, or the Dutch Assistant Resident who makes an appearance to kick off the annual horse races in Padang Panjang with the "Wihelmus" (Dutch national anthem) playing in the background.[122] In another sense, however, the Dutch are ever present. Like many other Indonesian writers of the 1930s, Hamka sprinkled his prose with Dutch words. In a random sample from *Mr. Director* of 1939, he uses *beheerder* for manager, *clubgebouw* for clubhouse, *voorzitter* for chairperson, *leesgezelschap* for reading society, and, in a usage combining a Dutch word with Malay grammar, *wijk-wijk* for neighborhoods.[123]

More significant in Hamka's storyscape are economic changes set in motion when Holland opened the Indies to the forces of global capitalism. In *Migrating to Deli*, the couple Poniem and Sujono ride the express train (*sneltrein*) from the plantation district of Deli into the entrepôt city of Medan:

> Every time Poniem turned her face to the window of the train she saw row upon row of rubber trees, straight and long. Or she saw oil palm trees—mature ones or only recently planted ones. Or tea plants being harvested or recently trimmed. She saw coolies, men and women, busily tapping rubber or picking oil-palm fruits, their faces scorched by the heat. Not far away stood their foremen with their rattan canes, eyes glaring and mustaches crossing their upper lips. And in the distance she could see the big boss in his short pants and pith helmet, dauntingly lording it over the coolies.[124]

From the *sneltrein* itself to the rubber and tea and oil-palm plantations and the conspicuous hierarchy of Native coolies, foremen, and white "big bosses"—as implied by the short pants and pith helmet—we see capitalism at work in the high colonial tropics. The plantation belt of North Sumatra, like other hubs of the new economy, drew vast numbers of hopeful migrants from rural villages and towns. "The call of Deli," writes Hamka in *Migrating to Deli*, "is heard like thunder everywhere, all around the island of Sumatra. It's this that has lifted the feet of Tapanuli people and Minangkabau people to Deli ever since it was opened. It's Deli that calls Americans to chase after dollars, and contract coolies to chase after a plate of noodles once a month, and village folk to seek and gather one small coin at a time."[125]

Hamka had answered the siren call himself, earning good money as a religious instructor in the plantation belt in the late 1920s and succeeding as a journalist in the hub city of Medan in the 1930s. The same phenomenon on Java had transformed Surabaya—featured in two of his novels—into another hub city of global reach, with ships coming and going regularly from Hong Kong, Kobe, and Australia and, like Medan, a population including Chinese, Arabs, Japanese, Europeans, and many others from across the globe.[126] This

colonial economy brought fortune to some and misfortune to others. Hamka dwelled upon the indentured labor system, which brought menial laborers from Java to Sumatra in a form of debt servitude. The woman Poniem, last seen peering from the *sneltrein* window, had arrived in Deli as a so-called contract coolie. In the "land of the Penal Sanction [the law penalizing laborers for breach of contract]," he wrote, human beings become mere tools, worth no more than the "mattocks and crowbars that they hold in their hands."[127]

Capitalism itself, Hamka wrote in *Mr. Director*, was based on such values. "If being cruel is necessary to expand the business," says Djazuli, Mr. Director himself, "then one must be cruel. . . . The system these days requires it."[128] The uneven impact of "the system," including the boom of the 1920s and the brutal impact of the Great Depression that followed, reached deep into the village world. As small farmers sold or hocked their lands to pay off debts or to seek their fortunes in Deli, Hamka wrote, "Wet rice fields, one plot at a time, shifted from the poor to the rich."[129] Men and women who once owned their own land now found themselves planting, weeding, and harvesting rice for wages; a new class of hungry people formed amid the better off.[130] For some, things were even worse. After losing her job with the Dutch van Oosts, Mariah, heroine of *Cast Out*, finds herself adrift in an economy where she can find no decent work at all.

The same new economy that brought expansion and growth to places like Deli, Medan, and Surabaya also energized provincial towns. Hamka described how the Minangkabau market town of Padang Panjang flourished after World War I as the site of new religious academies founded by a new generation of Islamic reformers; these included his own father, Haji Rasul, who for many years taught at the Steel Bridge School, named after the Dutch-built railroad bridge that was a local landmark.[131] Padang Panjang, Hamka wrote in *The Sinking of the* van der Wijck, is a city of progress. Students at the town's religious academies did not cut themselves off from society and study only Arabic-language books. They had "changed to the new fashions" and wore neckties and other Western clothing and were learning Dutch and English.[132] These schools figured importantly in the lives of two of Hamka's leading protagonists, Hamid of *In the Shelter of the Ka'ba* and Zainuddin of *The Sinking of the* van der Wijck, both of whom thrive in Padang Panjang's invigorating provincial modernity.

As Hamka reminded his readers, Padang Panjang also possessed a Dutch normal school, making it a significant regional center not only of Muslim learning but of modern secular education.[133] Several of Hamka's characters come from such Dutch-language schools. He placed them among the colony's

tiny vanguard of Western-educated elites. Sofjan of *Cast Out*, for example, rises to the highest level and graduates from the colonial law school in Batavia. He becomes a successful lawyer whose modern Dutch-sounding nickname—actually short for Sofjan but conveniently ambiguous—is Jan.[134]

In *Cast Out*, Sofjan, a Minangkabau youth, marries the elite Sundanese girl Emi from Java. Theirs is one of several cross-ethnic pairings that occur in Hamka's stories. The mobility created by the colonial economy and the creation of polyglot urban centers made such couplings ever more possible and likely. Hamka celebrated them. Sofjan meets Emi while he is studying far from home in Batavia. They are principled and compassionate people; this forms the foundation of their good marriage. Leman, the Minangkabau trader in *Migrating to Deli*, marries Poniem, a Javanese contract coolie; working together, they succeed in a small business. Away from their extended families and home villages, these young couples are adrift in the new society. Many of Hamka's characters try to find their way between the old ways of the village and the new ones of the cities. "For our people," he wrote, this is an age of *pancaroba*, like the change of the seasons, "a time of separating the old-fashioned from the modern."[135]

Society itself is also adrift in Hamka's storyscape. Evidence for this could be seen in the crass indifference of the rich for the poor in the capitalist economy of Sumatra's plantation belt and the colony's big cities. Hamka does not stigmatize minorities such as the Chinese or Arabs but places blame squarely on ethnic Indonesians—"our people"—such as the Malay Djazuli of *Mr. Director.* Djazuli's money lust leads him to violate the fundamental values of trust, generosity, and compassion. Djazuli is Hamka's caricature of materialism as an obsession; he is a man utterly bereft of social and ethical moorings for whom profit is everything. But materialism also infected Hamka's protagonists in more nuanced ways, especially when conflated with an infatuation with Western social mores. Hayati, the object of Zainuddin's affections in *The Sinking of the* van der Wijck, is a proper young woman who has been educated in Muslim schools. It is her worldly, city-bred friend and confidante, Chadijah, who tempts her to abandon the straight and narrow for "modern ways." Chadijah leads her to remove her head scarf and to wear immodest Western dresses. She also convinces Hayati to abandon her religious boyfriend, Zainuddin, for someone with money and prospects in the urban economy, namely, Aziz, her own ne'er-do-well brother. Hayati agonizes over each decision; she has a moral compass, but the seduction is too strong and she succumbs, only to regret and repent by the end of the novel.

Hamka treats Hayati affectionately and leads his readers to agonize with her, a strategy that must have been especially effective in the original serialized

form. (Impatient readers in Aceh evidently went to the train station to intercept the latest installments.)[136] Hamka described scornfully the greed of Minangkabau villagers who goaded young men into expensive second marriages and to return home laden with ostentatious gifts of jewels and furniture, which often proved ruinous. "The haughty airs they put on as they step down from the automobile," he wrote in *Migrating to Deli*, "these are the airs that everyone who goes off to Deli dreams of, even if, after this, there will be no more airs."[137] In two of his novels, *Migrating to Deli* and *Di Djeput Mamaknya* (Carried off by her maternal uncle), loving marriages in Deli are destroyed by the meddling of greedy relatives back in the village. Materialism is corroding the moral fiber of our people, he was saying, and distorting the hallowed customs of the village. In these changing times, people don't always know how to behave.

Hamka's stories of the time often dwelled on the moral hazards of poverty, especially for women. In the frontier atmosphere of the plantation belt, attractive women who came as coolies from Java faced the temptations of creating better lives as concubines of white bosses or of well-paid Native foremen. Others entered into quasi-legitimate but tenuous relationships with powerful men, "possibly as a third wife, or a seventh," alluding to nonchalance about the sanctity of marriage. (Islam permits up to four wives, although Hamka disapproved of the practice.) Other women were drawn into the public life of *ronggeng* women, singers and dancers who offered sex on the side. Eventually, wrote Hamka in *Migrating to Deli*, many such women ended up being passed "from hand to hand" until they fell into abject prostitution, living in low-rent Chinese or Japanese hotels and selling themselves in order to eat.[138]

Poniem of *Migrating to Deli* is Hamka's strongest female character. She becomes a contract coolie. A recruiter in Java passes himself off as a suitor to her naïve, hard-pressed parents. They believe they are sending her off to prosperous married life in golden Deli.[139] In Sumatra she marries a fellow Javanese coolie, who deserts her, after which she becomes a concubine to a plantation foreman, who showers her with gold jewelry. When a Minangkabau petty trader named Leman proposes to her, she is being well provided for but is not properly married. He convinces her of his sincerity, and she runs away with him, jewelry and all, to be formally married "in the Muslim way," writes Hamka.[140]

Leman has made Poniem respectable, and she becomes his loyal wife and business partner. Due largely to her business acumen, they prosper in Deli. But they are childless. Leman subsequently succumbs to pressure from his relatives to take a second wife, a proper Minangkabau wife. This in turn implicates him in a complex web of social obligations and ruinous financial expectations. Now

it is his turn to arrive home in the village borne in an automobile and bearing ostentatious gifts. Poniem is long-suffering in the face of Leman's sneering relatives and competition from his new wife. But eventually there are fights, and Leman divorces her. As she departs the household, she is joined by Leman's longtime Javanese employee Sujono, another former coolie. They marry. Hard-working, frugal, and enterprising, the couple prospers as Leman falls into hardship and retreats with his young wife to the village, a failure. In a typical Hamka touch, Poniem and Sujono see them off at the station, and as they board the train, she slips a coin into the hand of their little girl.[141] Despite the many ups and downs of her life, Poniem is the clear hero of the story. Readers are led to understand that she has survived with her dignity intact, someone who has managed to live honorably under circumstances of considerable uncertainty and duress.

A harsher fate befalls Mariah in Hamka's *Cast Off.* When her jealous husband rashly divorces her, believing wrongly that she has betrayed him with another man, Mariah is set adrift, with no resources to fall back upon. In the deepening Great Depression, she struggles to find work of any kind and finally becomes a servant to the van Oosts. When they later go home to Holland, she marries in haste a man who squanders all she has left and then divorces her. She falls into prostitution and ends up at the age of forty-five working as a maid in a Batavia brothel. Hamka makes it clear that Mariah is a good person at heart. He locates the cause of her disgrace (and of others like her) in wrongs done by "we men" and in the wrongs of the society at large—an unbalanced society in which someone like Mariah finds it impossible to earn a livelihood decently.[142]

Yet for all the disturbing aspects of Indonesia's *pancaroba*, Hamka found reason for hope, even exuberance. This optimism became part of his storyscape as well. Poniem, for example, and her new husband, Sujono, make a good life for themselves in Deli. They no longer yearn to return to crowded Java but are happy "to remain forever Delians."[143] They have "already become part of a new society," Hamka says, "Deli society, which is made up of ethnic groups from the whole of Indonesia." In Deli and other urban centers, a new hybrid society was forming in which the languages and customs and the bloodlines of the diverse archipelago were blending together: "A new generation of true Indonesians [*anak Indonesia jang sejati*] is being born."[144]

In such a new society, people could free themselves from the constraints and smallness of village life and become something new. Zainuddin, hero of *The Sinking of the* van der Wijck, for example, moves to Batavia and later Surabaya, where he blossoms as a writer and dedicates himself to "planting seeds of

unity" over the entire archipelago—our country.[145] When Musa, the hapless mattress repairman in *Carried Off by Her Maternal Uncle*, refuses to bow to pressure from his wife's relatives and live alone in Deli while his wife and child dwell in the village, Hamka praises him by saying, "You are a modern man, Musa." (Musa is also an avid reader who yearns to improve himself, Hamka tells us.)[146] Even for Musa, life in the colony's burgeoning urban centers is better than life in the village. By contrast, the depiction of village life in Hamka's storyscape is resolutely negative. In *Carried Off by Her Maternal Uncle,* two Minangkabau clans engage in a spiteful battle of gossip, insults, slurs, and ridicule over Musa's marriage and his life in Deli, which has not yielded the hoped-for success and treasures.[147]

Musa's problem is, in a way, a particularly Minangkabau one, since by custom in Minangkabau's matrilineal society, land and wealth flow through the female line. In raising children, authority resides first with a child's maternal uncle (*mamak*), not with the father. (As a Muslim modernist, Hamka opposed these elements of Minangkabau custom on principle and strongly advocated father-led nuclear families. But he had more personal reasons to resent them as well, as we shall see.) Musa's insistence that his wife and child reside with him as a nuclear family—away from the child's *mamak*—makes him a modern man.

Another scathing portrait of provincial life occurs in Hamka's "Di Suruh Meminta Ampun" (Called to apologize), in which a village headman lords it over fellow villagers as a titled official (*demang*) and spy on behalf of the Dutch colonial administration. In the story, the wife of a political prisoner is obliged to degrade herself performing menial tasks for the wife of the headman to gain an audience with him. ("Sometimes you have to crawl under the chicken house to get the egg," writes Hamka, invoking another proverb.)[148] But Hamka's disdain for provincial life was not limited to West Sumatra. Poniem and Sujono were also better off in Deli, far from their Javanese villages, and so too were the inhabitants of the working-class neighborhood in Surabaya that Hamka depicts warmly in *Mr. Director*.[149]

Emerging within the new urban Indies is a civil society. Hamka depicts this development vividly in his stories. In *Mr. Director*, for example, a Surabaya club calling itself United Youth (Persatuan Pemuda) invites Djazuli to address the group about his success in business.[150] In *The Sinking of the* van der Wijck, Hayati and Aziz and Zainuddin—young Minangkabaus on the move—reconnect with each other through the Sumatra Young People's Club in Surabaya, around which a variety of cultural and political activities flourish. The autobiographical Zainuddin is exemplary of this new social energy, gaining a reputation for himself as a rising intellectual and literary figure who identifies

himself conspicuously as Indonesian. Meanwhile, in *Mr. Director*, a group of nonelite characters led by a certain Pak Jasin is organizing literacy education and volunteer social services among Surabaya's working poor.[151]

Participating in such endeavors could be dangerous in the colony. Although Zainuddin and his literary activities stood clear of Dutch harassment, Pak Jasin in *Mr. Director* is arrested and brought to trial for organizing an antigovernment "secret society."[152] He is acquitted after a dramatic trial. But in "Called to Apologize" from the same period, the Muslim political activist Yusof is jailed as a troublemaker and suspected Communist and sent to die in the Boven Digul prison camp in distant New Guinea, also a part of "our country." Despite such dangers, Hamka celebrates the political movement and the larger civil society of clubs and youth groups and magazines and newspapers that were flourishing throughout the colony—all energized at one level or another by hopes and dreams of "Indonesia."[153]

The rising importance of Western education is also prominent in Hamka's storyscape. This privilege fell to an elite few, which did not include Hamka himself. But Hamka appreciated the value of this new elite to Indonesia's changing society and held its members in esteem, especially individuals like Haji Agus Salim, Mohammad Natsir, Mohammad Hatta, and Sukarno. He featured all of them in *Society's Compass*. In *In the Shelter of the Ka'ba*, Hamid is such a young man, having attended exclusive Dutch-language schools in Padang, thanks to a rich benefactor. Zainuddin, in other ways Hamka's doppelgänger as the protagonist of *The Sinking*, learns Dutch and English while studying in Padang Panjang. And in *Cast Out*, the young Sofjan, alias Jan, joins the very small Indies elite of Dutch-educated professional people, a lawyer practicing in the colonial capital. Hamka signals his approval in a melodramatic courtroom scene in which Sofjan compassionately defends the aging Mariah, who has murdered someone.[154]

In Hamka's Indies storyscape of the late 1930s, one encounters a mix of the troubling and the good. Especially good was the liberating atmosphere of the Dutch colony's burgeoning cities and adjacent agribusiness frontiers like Deli. In such places, among people socially adrift, the grip of outworn customs and practices could be loosened to make room for something new to grow. This something new was Islam, the Islam of *Modern Sufism* and the modernists that embraced learning and striving and change but that also furnished a moral compass. Most of Hamka's stories are infused with his moral sensibility and sprinkled with Muslim "signs": prayer times, rituals, and the occasional sermonette-like aside. But the stories are virtually free of references to the Qur'an and Hadith, quotations in Arabic, and discussions of al-Ghazali and other Muslim

authorities that characterize *Modern Sufism* and Hamka's other religious writing. In the stories, Hamka emphasizes not theology but character. In *Migrating to Deli*, it is Poniem's honest and sincere character that makes her the hero; she is in fact never depicted in an overtly religious act, aside from being married by a *qadi* (Muslim judge). And in *Cast Out*, it is Sofjan's human decency and compassion that Hamka emphasizes, not his religiosity. Even in *The Sinking of the* van der Wijck, a book in which questions of religious behavior arise more frequently, it is Zainuddin's character as a striver that leads him to a purposeful life.

It is only in *Mr. Director* that Hamka explicitly connects Islam with Indonesia's burgeoning cities and describes what an Islam-infused society might look like.[155] The scene is a neighborhood of the urban poor in Surabaya. This neighborhood of small rented dwellings hidden away from the main thoroughfares is typical of many in the big cities of the Indies occupied by the colony's ubiquitous working poor (peddlers of ice, soups, and barbecued meats, horse-cart drivers, and menial laborers of all kinds). Many of the rental homes in this particular neighborhood are owned by Pak Jasin, who is also the community's affable and wise paterfamilias. In this unlikely setting, Jasin has created a modest Muslim utopia. He rents his small apartments for affordable prices and is generous with loans to his tenants. He assists the sick, commiserates with hardships, dispenses advice, and even launches a night school to promote literacy and reading. He is also the center of the neighborhood's religious life, having built the prayerhouse where everyone gathers at day's end to pray the sunset prayer and to share stories in gregarious conversation. Harmony reigns. What is exemplary about Pak Jasin is not that he is a pious Muslim but that he practices the social values of Islam. He is compassionate, kind, just, and generous.

The plot of *Mr. Director* revolves around Jasin's refusal to sell his valuable land to a property developer (Djazuli) to make way for a factory. If Jasin were a true capitalist, he would do so without blinking, since those who are consumed by capitalism care only for money. To Jasin, however, money is only the means to an end. He tells the young Fauzi—who is planning to launch an ambitious business enterprise—that, as a Muslim, he is not only permitted to seek wealth but also obligated to so do.[156] Wealth is good. Greed, envy, hate, and the exploitation and abuse of fellow human beings are bad. In seeking wealth one should first "be thankful for God's grace for what one has" and dedicate oneself to goals other than money: achieving self-respect, devoting oneself to religion, maintaining friendships, and living an upright and proper life.[157] Let money be the road, but make these higher goals the destination.

Hamka was known for killing off his characters, but he was not alone among Indonesian writers of the day in doing so. The deaths of Zainab and Hamid in *In the Shelter of the Ka'ba*, of Zainuddin and Hayati in *The Sinking of the* van der Wijck, and of Mariah in *Cast Out* mirrored similar events in the famous *Sitti Nurbaya* by Marah Rusli and Abdul Muis's *Salah Asuhan* and other Balai Pustaka best sellers. Armijn Pane, a contemporary of Hamka's, suggested that this plot device reflected the influence of nineteenth-century Western romantic fiction on Indonesia's neophyte writers.[158] Nidhi Aeusrivongse, in his study of early Indonesian novels, has suggested that "the death of the main character at the end of a story" suggests "discordance in reality." This certainly comports with Hamka's theme of *pancaroba*.[159] Still, looking at Hamka's fiction in the context of his other writing, it seems likely that Hamka was also making a theological point. By putting his readers through the catharsis of vicarious death, he was reminding them that, in the end, life and death are in God's hands.

Hamka believed deeply in human agency, a major theme of *Modern Sufism*. He often reminded his readers that a larger plan is at work, God's plan, or Sunnatullah. The internal workings of nature—for example, how tiny cells combine to form distinct creatures—are unalterable in God's plan; they are "fixed in fate and the intentions of Almighty God."[160] So, too, is one's own lifespan; we cannot determine the time of our death, or *ajal*. Otherwise, we are enjoined not so much to make our own fate as to fulfill it, using all the gifts God has given us, most importantly, the ability to think and the freedom to choose.[161]

A common metaphor in Hamka's writing is a small boat struggling to stay afloat in rough waters.[162] Those in the boat must do everything in their power to reach the shore. Whether they survive or not, however, is in God's hands. As he put it in *In the Shelter of the Ka'ba* at the end of a chapter in which he has rekindled hopes for a happy ending, "Moreover, we human beings don't determine our own fates."[163] In Hamka's stories, such passages almost always portend calamity. We soon learn that Zainab has died. As Hayati in *The Sinking of the* van der Wijck departed for home on the doomed steamship, Hamka writes, the passengers "fell asleep without the slightest suspicion about events already determined by God in eternity."[164] It is no wonder that at least one reader of *Society's Compass* telegraphed Hamka begging him to spare her.[165]

The readers of *Modern Sufism* and the stories may have scratched their heads over the finer points of free will and fate. It remained a point of some confusion among the modernists themselves, as well as other theologians of Islam and Christianity. One of the strengths of Hamka's Great Story may be

traced to his unwillingness to tighten every screw. Loose ends remained. Hamka didn't seem to agonize over these nagging contradictions. As someone who accepted the divine truth of the Qur'an, Hamka certainly believed that God was all-powerful and all-knowing. Yet as a young Muslim coming of age in a time of rapid change and promise, he could not resist the thrilling idea that humans like himself could shape things to come.

Into War

Hamka led his readers into 1941 by saying, "Only God knows what will happen next."[166] In the pages of *Society's Compass*, he had followed the war as German armies advanced into the Balkans, Crete, and Russia and as Japan advanced into French Indochina in July 1940.[167] In the Indies, the nervous Dutch outlawed the use of the word "Indonesia" in public speeches and broadcasts, and Hamka alerted his readers to the arrest of certain "troublemakers," such as his father, Haji Rasul, who was held under preventive detention and then exiled to Sukabumi in West Java.[168] He offered vocal support to Indonesian nationalists in the Volksraad who continued in vain to lobby for an elected parliament and praised the selection of Indies-born Dr. H. J. van Mook as minister of colonies in exile.[169] On December 10, 1941, *Society's Compass* reported Japanese attacks in Hawai'i, the Philippines, and nearby Malaya and Singapore and warned its readers that war might also soon engulf them. The Dutch East Indies was officially at war with Japan: "The moment that we have long feared has arrived, and we are now embraced in the moment."[170] He warned against "careless talk" and against price gouging. "Let's put our full trust in the government," he said, and await what will befall us "in the awareness that there is only one place to seek shelter, Allah." Meanwhile, "Be calm and don't panic!"[171]

2

Father and Son

Hamka's indomitable father, Haji Rasul, died before World War II was over. Hamka last saw him in January 1944 while visiting Java.[1] By this time Hamka had nearly completed the first draft of a biography of Haji Rasul called *Ajahku* (My father). Published in 1950 after Hamka had settled in Jakarta, the book captured vividly Haji Rasul's character and his formative role in the movement for Islamic renewal in early twentieth-century Sumatra. Its attention to detail was remarkable, and subsequently *My Father* became a foundational source for the first scholarly histories of Islamic modernism in the Dutch East Indies.[2] In it Hamka deftly tied together the history of his ethnic society of Minangkabau, the evolving influence of Islam, and the genealogy of his own family, ending with his father and himself. *My Father* marked the beginning of an autobiographical project that would eventually include four volumes of Hamka's own memoirs, in which he described his rise from a rural childhood on the lake to his success in Medan and—in the final two volumes—the traumatic years of occupation and revolution that led to independence.[3] In these works, Hamka examined not only his own roots but the roots of modern society in Sumatra and, by extension, in the Indies at large—"our country." In doing so, he wove his own story into the Great Story of Islam and Indonesia.[4]

Alam Minangkabau

Hamka begins *My Father* by sketching out the earliest known facts about Minangkabau's origins as a gold-rich kingdom in central Sumatra. By the fourteenth century, this society was already embraced within the Hindu-Buddhist civilization originating from India and long since rooted in Southeast Asia, including the Java-based empire of Majapahit of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[5] The Minangkabau kingdom of Pagaruyung was a vassal

state of Majapahit, and Hamka dates the origins of Minangkabau's vaunted *adat* (customs or customary laws) to this bright period (ca. 1347–1375).[6] By this time Islam had already made its beachhead in the region. It seeped into Minangkabau slowly from Muslim centers on the periphery of the heartland, such as Pedir, Ulakan, and Melaka, borne by "unknown spreaders of Islam."[7] During the fifteenth century, the nearby kingdom of Aceh was a formidable Muslim state in its golden age. Although Minangkabau's mountainous terrain kept Acehnese political advances at bay, the kingdom's influence penetrated the Alam (Minangkabau heartland) through disciples of Aceh's great Sufi teachers, Hamzah Fansuri and Abd al-Ra'uf al-Singkili. By 1600 or so, Minangkabau had its first Muslim king.[8]

There followed a long period of religious thrust and parry during which the unique hybridities of Muslim Minangkabau were formed. Many of the "old ways" remained, including the matrilineal inheritance system, a highly elaborated status structure festooned with titles, and institutional mechanisms for consensus seeking among elders. Given such elements, Islam and its laws (*shari'a*) found a place, but not an altogether domineering place. Hamka summarizes the accommodation as "a Muslim structure formed in accordance with a Minangkabau worldview."[9] One should see it not so much like oil and water but more like the smooth suspension of water and fat in milk. One completed the other, as Minangkabau's customary *adat* became "infused with the spirit of Islam."[10]

Proverbs illustrate the point. "The *shari'a* is naked without *adat*," declares one. Another states, "What the *shari'a* dictates, *adat* applies." Hamka explains this by saying that Islamic law was applied only through a process of *mufakat*, or "consensus."[11]

In Hamka's depiction of the Minangkabau kingdom of the seventeenth century, no one ruler ruled outright. Instead, three territorial lords formed a sort of coalition of leadership under the nominally "most exalted" lord, the Raja Alam, based in Pagaruyung. Each lord ruled in consultation with a council of senior officials called the Besar Empat Balai (Four big men) in something like a republic.[12] At the local level, matrilineal clan chiefs, or *penghulu*, led quasi-independent hamlets (*nagari*) composed of village clusters that possessed their own customs, their own mosques, and their own titled elders.[13] Embedded within this elaborate and loosely structured highland society was a second elite made up of religious scholars—the *alim-ulama* or *tuanku*—and their students. As religious men and revered teachers and as *shaykh*s of Sufi brotherhoods, the *ulama*s exercised great influence. Through the vast teacher-student networks

of which they were part, new influences from the greater Muslim world spread into the Minangkabau highlands.[14] The *ulama*s did not represent an altogether alternative elite, however, since by marriage—and ordinarily multiple marriages—they were inescapably enmeshed in the matrilineal clan life of the society.

By the late 1700s, Hamka writes, internal tensions in this delicately balanced matrix had overcome its stability. Rivalries erupted among matrilineal clans, villages, and hamlets over small incidents made large by notions of honor: disputed cockfights, illicit unions, and the like. These conflicts were rendered larger still as devotees of two competing Sufi brotherhoods, the Aceh-influenced Shattariyyah and the heartland-oriented Naqshbandiyyah, erupted in a bitter rivalry for followers and influence.[15] All of this set the stage for a period of epic conflict in the nineteenth century and, not incidentally, for the emergence of Hamka's ancestors as agents of history.

A blast of reformist energy jolted the Minangkabau out of this desultory disorder. In 1802 three Minangkabau hajis returned home from Mecca bearing the purifying message of the Wahhabis. Promoting "true Islam," they set about cleansing the heartland of its religious heresies and errant practices.[16] Under a certain Tuanku nan Renceh, the movement took an extremist turn. His angry followers rampaged throughout the Minangkabau highlands in a cleansing reign of terror, setting fire to any hamlet that resisted and imposing, under pain of death, a strict regimen of behavior that forbade wine drinking, gambling, cockfighting, betel nut chewing, and exposing women's hair.[17]

The Padris, as they came to be known, constituted a life threat to the established Minangkabau order and its ruling hierarchy of royals, officials, clan chiefs, and elders.[18] The desperate ruling classes turned to the Dutch, who agreed in 1821 to contain the Padris in return for control over the Minangkabau heartland. A long, bitter war followed until the Dutch prevailed at last in 1837, defeating Padri war chief Imam Bondjol and sending him off to exile in the far reaches of the Indies. Hamka points out that he died in Menado, a place Hamka's readers would recognize as "our country."[19] This is how Minangkabau was added to Holland's rapidly expanding tropical colony.

In a process that paralleled other parts of the Indies, the Dutch soon introduced the compulsory cultivation of coffee along with a host of new indigenous officials to fill out the lower rungs of the colonial administration. The old villages and hamlets now rested within a Dutch administrative hierarchy. People who once lived in a *nagari* now resided in an *afdeeling*, or "subdistrict." Local Minangkabau officials, who included coffee-warehouse foremen,

answered to a chain of command that led upward to white Dutch Controleurs, Assistant Residents, and, far away in Padang, the Resident himself. "It was certainly clear," writes Hamka, "that power had shifted from the *shari'a* to the Dutch."[20]

My Lineage

Hamka's great-great-grandfather Tuanku Pariaman, also known as Abdullah Arif, emerged amid this turmoil. Entering the highlands in the early nineteenth century from Pariaman, the coastal town closest to upland Lake Maninjau, Abdullah Arif established himself as a popular religious teacher, married into several high-status matrilineal clans, and established a lineage of prominent religious scholars.[21] He was an early Wahhabist-Padri reformer but only joined the radical faction after the Dutch were drawn in. He then became a dedicated Padri and rose to command Padri forces in the area east of Lake Maninjau. At Andalas in 1832, he led a passionate defense against overwhelming odds against Dutch and Javanese forces and was finally defeated and captured.[22]

In an aside, Hamka informs his readers that he had passed through Andalas personally in 1947 and 1948 during the revolution. He asked around among the older people about Tuanku Pariaman and the fall of Andalas. What stories lingered? One of Tuanku Pariaman's own students betrayed the defenders of Andalas, they told him. To this day people take the trouble to throw stones at his roadside grave.[23]

Released after the war, Tuanku Pariaman returned to the life of a religious teacher. He settled on Lake Maninjau at Sungai Batang and became famous for his lessons and Qur'anic recitations at the local mosque. "Every night," Hamka's father told him, "120 damar tapers were set out to illuminate the recitations. . . . *Ulama*s and their students by the dozens came from all around the lake" to hear them.[24]

Before Tuanku Pariaman, there appear to have been no notable religious teachers in Sungai Batang. "The story of the rise of our family, an Islam-identified family," Hamka writes, "could not have been written before Tuanku Pariaman's arrival."[25] Following Tuanku Pariaman (also known as Ungku Sjech Pariaman and Tuanku nan Tuo in his later years of august distinction) came four generations of men who made their names as *ulama*s.

Tuanku Pariaman chose a favored student, Abdullah Saleh, to marry his daughter. The couple became Hamka's great-grandparents. In family lore, Abdullah Saleh, also known as Ungku Sjech Suku Tandjung and Tuanku Guguk Katur, was a devoted mystic and follower of the Sufi teachings of al-Ghazali.

Near his lakeside *surau*, or "prayerhouse school," he built a waterfall and placed a flat white stone beside it. There he would pray in the middle of the night (the *tahajjud* prayers).[26]

Amrullah Saleh's son Muhammad Amrullah was a prodigy who became Hamka's grandfather and the family patriarch. He is said to have memorized the Qur'an at a young age and to have been authorized to teach a full curriculum of Qur'an exegesis (*tafsir*), law (*fiqh*), mysticism (*tasauf*), and Arabic grammar by the age of twenty-six.[27] Even as a young man he became an extraordinarily popular teacher, with a following well beyond his home school. He then shifted to Mecca for five years of study and joined the Naqshbandiyyah brotherhood. Afterward, he lived out the grand life of a revered religious authority in Minangkabau, touring throughout the highlands to teach and preach, borne aloft in a palanquin, with a retinue of students carrying his books and belongings.[28]

Muhammad Amrullah married eight wives and sired forty-six children, linking himself and his progeny to other elite matrilineal clans and male religious lineages across the Alam. (His first wife, Siti Salemah, for example, was the sister-in-law of a *tuanku laras*, one of the Dutch-created offices whose occupants now enjoyed lordly authority—and considerable wealth—as heads of Dutch-imposed administrative units in the new colonial order.)[29] A plump man with a shining face, he had an easygoing demeanor and an estimable bearing. In recognition of his renown and authority, the *adat* chiefs and *ulama*s and Native officials of the Maninjau region joined his extended family in a massive ritual feast marked by the slaughter of numerous water buffalo to confer upon him the honored title Tuanku Kisai, the name by which he is most famously remembered.[30]

During the Japanese occupation, an old *shaykh* who had been a student of Hamka's grandfather told Hamka that Tuanku Kisai was a man of rare learning and charisma and then added, "His prayers could work miracles." One day, on his way home from an outlying village, the *shaykh* told Hamka, Tuanku Kisai approached a local mosque at sunset to pray. In a coffee stall across from the mosque, a clutch of youths sat idling about. He called to them, "Hey, young men, *magrib* [twilight prayer time] has come. Let's wash and pray!" A few of the young men followed him, but the others ignored him and drifted away. After the prayers had been concluded and as he stood on the mosque steps before going home, he said, "These people are obligated to repent. If they don't, a punishment from God will come, believe me!" Before Tuanku Kisai reached home in Air Selubuk, the Kampung Tengah mosque had caught fire and soon burned to ash.[31]

Stories such as these fueled a popular belief in Tuanku Kisai's magical powers, a belief that Hamka readily acknowledges "went too far, even sometimes to [the great sin] of polytheism."[32] For many people, any substance with which Tuanku Kisai had been in intimate contact contained magical powers. People fought over the food he left uneaten, the water he washed his feet with, the betel juice he spat from his mouth. Old women brought their grandchildren to him so that he could bless them by blowing on their heads. When he died, people collected the water with which his body had been bathed both to drink and to sprinkle on their fields. His grave became a pilgrimage site where devotees burned incense and begged for assistance.[33]

Such beliefs were common at the time. In fact, black magic was ubiquitous and inseparable from religious life "all over Minangkabau."[34] Certain so-called *dukun* and *datu* were masters of the dark arts and of making offerings to the spirits and the *jinn*s. They could provide spells and tonics and amulets to bring on love or hate, to cause or cure sickness, and to ward off dangers. Hamka speaks of charms "as long as an arm hanging from people's waists."[35] The tombs of *ulama*s became suffused with spiritual power, like that of Hamka's own grandfather, sites for pilgrimages and making vows and supplications. Blended into this world of magic almost imperceptibly were certain Sufi teachings of Hamzah Fansuri of Aceh that inclined toward pantheism and mystical notions of "oneness of people with God."[36] As keepers of mystical knowledge, leaders of the Sufi brotherhoods were spiritually powerful people, and Hamka noted that no one was considered a true Muslim until he had entered the "mysteries" of one brotherhood or another.[37]

As Hamka hastens to point out, all of this stood in direct contradiction to the fundamental teaching of the Qur'an, namely, "There is no God but God." Yet no one dared to confront it. The *ulama*s themselves were either complicit or too weak to do anything. Islam had been degraded into little more than rituals, such as the celebration of the Prophet's birthday (Maulud), extensive feasts (leading to the pawnshop), and extravagant funeral rites of the sort held for the beloved Tuanku Kisai in 1907, the year before Hamka was born, that lasted one hundred days.[38]

One can imagine Hamka as the boy Malik being regaled with stories of his illustrious ancestors and extended family—a veritable cascade of titles such as Tuanku, Sjech, Haji, and Datuk leading as if inevitably to himself. But between the warmhearted and beloved Tuanku Kisai and the little boy Malik stood Haji Rasul, his own father and a man of a different and harder character. Hamka had spent the better part of his adolescence and adult life keeping his distance. Now, in this biography of Haji Rasul, Hamka tried to come to terms with his

august father by recounting his formative role in Indonesia's early twentieth-century awakening.

Father

At the moment of Mohammad Rasul's birth in 1879 in the Maninjau lakeside village of his mother, Andung Tarwasa, poles were cut from a nearby woods and stored beneath the house for his future prayerhouse school. (The name Rasul, meaning "messenger of God," came later. He was born Abdul Karim Amrullah.) Rasul became a naughty, confrontational, and curious boy. Hamka had such stories from his grandmother Tarwasa herself, who lived to be over one hundred and died during the Japanese occupation.[39] By age seven Rasul was expected to pray and fast, and at ten his father launched his religious education, sending him off to study the Qur'an and Arabic with one relative or former student or another around the lake and teaching him the finer points of Arabic grammar himself. By his sixteenth birthday he had read the entire Qur'anic commentary of the *Tafsir al-Jalalayn* and other classic works and awaited being sent to Mecca, where his father's former classmate Ahmad Chatib had established himself as a teacher known as Sjech Ahmad Chatib al-Minangkabaui.[40] The young Rasul spent the next seven years under his tutelage, forming lifelong friendships with fellow Minangkabau students Muhammad Djamil Djambek and Taher Djalaluddin al-Azhari and a close bond with his mentor. Despite a tempestuous relationship, Rasul embraced Ahmad Chatib's adamant rejection of Minangkabau customs that contradicted Muslim practices, such as matrilineal inheritance, magical arts, and the errant practices of the Sufi brotherhoods, even though Ahmad Chatib was himself a Sufi.[41]

Rasul brought these convictions home with him in 1901 and immediately began lashing out at Minangkabau's rampant religious anomalies. At twenty-three "his spirit was seething," Hamka writes.[42] Tuanku Kisai acted to assuage his angry son by finding him a beautiful young wife named Raihanah. In his secret diary, written in Arabic, Rasul called her "the blossom of my heart."[43]

A bizarre phenomenon marked the couple's wedding. Raihanah fell so ill she looked like a corpse, "rotten, like a rotten egg." This was attributed to a spell cast by a disappointed suitor. When Raihanah recovered, Rasul became impotent. Although he and Raihanah subsequently had a baby girl, Rasul was so troubled by this affliction that he threw himself into the study of the dark arts before returning to Mecca a second time. There, Ahmad Chatib rebuked him for taking an interest in the occult. Rasul's old mentor had him drink some *zam-zam* water (from the well of Mecca's al-Haram Mosque) over which he

said a certain mantra. Rasul forgot everything. Hamka's aside: "a guru's power of suggestion!"[44]

Sobered by his teacher's admonition, by Raihanah's death following childbirth, and by the death of their newborn son, Rasul performed the hajj in 1906 and returned home to take up the work of his aging father. At his family's insistence, he married Raihanah's younger sister Safijah. She became Hamka's mother.[45]

Hamka describes Rasul at this time as already exceptionally devout, attracting young men from "all over Minangkabau" to his *surau* at Sungai Batang: "He rose at 3:00 a.m. and prayed the nighttime prayers [*tahajjud*]. Afterward, he walked up to the loft of the prayerhouse and read predawn prayers [*tarhim*] until sunrise, with his melodious voice carrying to the peak of Pandji village. His students awoke, and nearby villagers, too, and all gathered to pray together at the prayerhouse."[46]

Many of the religious anomalies that Haji Rasul wanted to eliminate were associated with the Sufi brotherhoods. Since his own father was a Naqshbandiyyah *shaykh*, this was a sensitive matter. Things soon came to a head. In a heated meeting in Padang, young reformers led by Haji Rasul angrily confronted the old guard. The event marked the onset in West Sumatra of a contest between a young generation of reformers, the *kaum muda*, and an older generation of traditionalists, the *kaum tua*, that was already stirring in the colony at large.[47] Hamka writes of Rasul, "Only a few months after his return [from Mecca] in 1906, his standing as a pioneer of a new way of thinking in Minangkabau was already on the rise."[48]

Rasul was unsparing to the traditionalists. He doggedly refused to attend the extravagant one-hundred-day-long funeral rites following his father's death, saying that such feasts were *haram* (forbidden to Muslims). He also objected to the construction of a raised tomb, or gravesite, fearing that it would become a site for improper devotions.[49] Although these were local matters, even family matters, news of Rasul's intransigence spread far and wide.

In 1907 the Dutch introduced a new monthly tax to replace the compulsory delivery of coffee. A rebellion soon broke out in several places in Minangkabau. In the lake district of Maninjau the matrilineal clan elders weighed their options and prepared to join.[50] Rasul watched disapprovingly as men and youths bought charms to protect themselves from Dutch bullets and gathered anxiously to learn the secret knowledge of invulnerability. He counseled that these practices violated Islam's most fundamental teaching—there is no God but God. People who believed such things, he said, and who died in a war against the Dutch

should not be presumed as martyrs who would be rewarded in heaven. Moreover, given the strength of Dutch weapons, the Minangkabaus might not win.

Word soon arrived from a nearby district that local rebels had been crushed. Magic amulets had failed. At his prayerhouse, Rasul made a pile of occult writings, wayward Sufi texts, and charms made of tiger skins, animal teeth, and deer horns and set it all afire. If you want to overcome the fear of death, he told would-be warriors, place your faith in the One God.[51] Rasul's intervention, says Hamka, helped people turn away from a violent response to the Dutch. War fever soon lapsed in Maninjau. Rasul seized the opportunity of the failed rebellion to press his case against sorcery and superstition. He gathered a great number of former practitioners to his prayerhouse and recruited them to the ranks of his army of Muslim renewal.[52]

At the outset, the campaign for renewal focused on practices that were part of everyday Islam in Minangkabau but that were either forbidden (*haram*) or heretical (*bidah* or *bid'a*) in the eyes of the reformists. Aside from practicing sorcery and holding elaborate funeral feasts and making pilgrimages to the tombs of "saints," these acts included pronouncing the word *usalli* before praying; standing up to read an account of the Prophet's life on the tenth day of the new year; instructing corpses to say the *shahadat* (the profession of faith) and other Qur'anic verses—a common feature of funeral rites; paying fees to ransom the souls of departed relatives; and chanting certain holy phrases to music. The reformists also warned their listeners against judging a "good Muslim" on the basis of what he or she wore. Contrary to the local belief, they said, wearing a *sarung* just so (over trousers, in this case) is not required of male believers. And, they said, don't turn your backs on science: modern astronomers are perfectly capable of determining the moment Ramadan ends, for example—a much-contested issue.[53] Finally, the reformists also raised more fundamentally theological issues.

A handful of reformers in the Middle East were driving the "new way of thinking," especially the much-traveled Iranian Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838–1897) and the Egyptian Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905).[54] Al-Afghani and Abduh had become well acquainted with both Western imperialism and Western ideas. Both pondered deeply the historical crisis of Islam and of Muslim peoples that had rendered them subjects and mendicants in a world ruled by Europeans. They envisioned a world community of Muslims reawakened by drawing wisely from the lessons of the West and by vigorous intellectual projects to modernize Islamic society, including its code of laws, the *shari'a*. This required Muslims to rebel against slavish devotion to received authority (*taklid*) and to

insist that the door to *ijtihad* never be closed. We Muslims, they said, must apply our unfettered rational faculties to understand and practice our faith. The Qur'an and the Prophet commanded us to do so.[55] As we have noted, Hamka himself had embraced this call for freedom of thought wholeheartedly. In *My Father*, he writes, this is what "Islam had been waiting for."[56]

By the early twentieth century, these provocative ideas were streaming into the Indies through the far-flung networks of teachers and students that linked Mecca and Egypt to prayerhouse schools and religious academies deep in the colony's heartland, including Haji Rasul's influential *surau* on the shores of Lake Maninjau. At the same time, these ideas were also being discussed avidly and propagated in a spate of pioneering newspapers and magazines. Al-Afghani and Abduh published the forerunner of these in 1884, when both men were in Paris. *Al-'Urwah al-wuthqá* (The firmest bond) sought to rouse Muslims from their torpor and into action.[57] Banned in the British Empire for its strong anti-colonial stance and abandoned after eighteen issues, the periodical nevertheless made its way through the Muslim world and "straight to Indonesia," writes Hamka.[58]

By 1896 Abduh and Rashid Rida had launched *Al-Manar* magazine from Egypt. Hamka describes *Al-Manar*'s far-flung subscribers as the *kaum muda* of the Muslim world.[59] In Southeast Asia it circulated through Singapore to readers across the archipelago. By 1906 it had inspired a local variant called *Al-Imam*, published in British Singapore and largely written by Sjech Taher Djalaluddin, Haji Rasul's old friend and Mecca classmate.[60] In the second issue of *Al-Imam*, Haji Rasul is named as the magazine's representative in Maninjau.[61] The debates occurring in local mosques and prayerhouses were now amplified and dispersed widely in print. The third issue of *Al-Imam* took up the question of whether or not one should stand up while reading the *marhaban* (praises) during celebration of the Prophet's birthday. Certainly not, argued *Al-Imam*, explaining that "this practice did not originate with the Prophet."[62] The same issue debunked popular myths surrounding the Prophet's miraculous ascent to heaven as described in certain Hadith. Most of these stories, it said, "are obvious lies" without an authoritative connection to the Prophet.[63]

When *Al-Imam* folded in 1909, Rasul joined two of his *kaum muda* compatriots to found a magazine of their own "as a successor to *Al-Imam*."[64] Haji Abdullah bin Haji Ahmad (Abdullah Ahmad) took the lead. He had represented *Al-Imam* in Padang Panjang and now shifted to the coastal entrepôt of Padang to open *Al-Munir* (The lamp) in 1911 in collaboration with Rasul and Sjech Muhammad Djamil Djambek of Bukittinggi. These three men together constituted the triumvirate of reformist Islam in Minangkabau. Hamka called

them "the Trio Ulama." All three had been students of Ahmad Chatib in Mecca. Djamil Djambek was a fierce foe of the Naqshbandiyyahs and a confirmed modernizer who was fluent in Dutch.[65] Abdullah Ahmad, a pioneering journalist, was the "pen" of the movement, writes Hamka; Haji Rasul was its "tongue."[66]

The generational war of the *kaum muda* and *kaum tua* divided Minangkabau. Opponents of the Trio Ulama put up the magazine *Suluh Melayu* (Malay torch) to counter the attacks from reformers. They accused Rasul and the others of embracing errant sects and heresies, including those of the Wahhabis and Mutazilites.[67] They even solicited a *fatwa* (an authoritative but nonbinding religious judgment) from conservative scholars in Mecca declaring that Rasul, Abdullah, and Djamil Djambek should be jailed if they attempted to enter Arabia on pilgrimage.[68] Hamka says that the three men "laughed off" this "torpedo of condemnation" and kept the pressure on. When the conservatives condemned them for approving Western clothing, Haji Rasul and Abdullah Ahmad began wearing Western trousers and neckties and Panama hats, just to make the point. They did this for years.[69]

Rasul eventually settled in Padang Panjang, where his Iron Bridge School became a magnet for students throughout the highlands. Writing as H.A.K.A. in *Al-Munir*—for *H*adji *A*bdul *K*arim *A*mrullah—he made a name for himself in Java and elsewhere in the region.[70] This included the neighboring Malay Peninsula, where nine Malay sultans now lived under British "protection" adjacent to three territories controlled outright by the British in Penang, Melaka, and Singapore.[71] At the invitation of *Al-Munir* subscribers, Haji Rasul made a tour of the region in 1916. His provocative reformist views so rattled the sultans and their conservative *ulama* advisors that he cut his trip short and returned to Dutch Sumatra.[72] Hamka uses this incident to illustrate how feudal power structures—Malaya's Muslim sultans but also, by implication, similar mini-kingdoms under Dutch "protection" in the Indies—could easily be manipulated by colonial powers, especially when they were propped up by old-fashioned religious authorities who demanded unquestioning obedience from the people. Hamka's contempt, and his father's, is clearly focused on the *ulama*s.

A long trip to Java the following year proved more fruitful. Java was already stirring with reformism and anticolonial activities. In Surabaya, Haji Rasul met H. O. S. Cokroaminoto, the charismatic leader of Sarekat Islam, a pioneering mass organization drawing vast numbers of people into organized dissent against the Dutch. Although impressed, Rasul remained disinclined toward politics. He found a more kindred spirit in Kyai H. A. Dahlan, who in 1912 had founded Muhammadiyah, the modernist reform-minded organization in the

spirit of Muhammad Abduh and Jamal al-Din al-Afghani. Dahlan was a faithful reader of *Al-Munir*. When Rasul arrived at the train station in Yogyakarta to meet him, Hamka tells us, he pinned a sign on his chest saying "H.A.K.A."[73] Rasul was impressed by Muhammadiyah's spirit of Islamic renewal and especially by its innovations in education. Dahlan was transforming Muslim education in Muhammadiyah schools by restructuring the curriculum to follow Western practices, standardizing classes, and teaching in classrooms.[74] Haji Rasul's exposure to the new winds on Java was transformative. When he returned to Sumatra, says Hamka, "he bore with him a new spirit."[75]

In 1918 Rasul reorganized his Iron Bridge School along the lines of Dahlan's efforts in Java, instituting a sequenced structure of first three and later seven grades. He introduced new textbooks, including works by the Andalusian rationalist Ibn Rushd.[76] Rasul's modern school, known as Sumatra Thawalib, flourished and attracted students from far and wide and of all ages. When Hamka attended Class IV at the Thawalib at age ten, he had classmates who were over thirty-five.[77]

Poising its students to participate in the colony's nascent youth organizations and political movements, Haji Rasul's Sumatra Thawalib became, in Jeffrey Hadler's words, "the most influential reformist school in the highlands."[78] Largely through the efforts of its graduates, similar schools soon sprouted everywhere in Minangkabau. (By 1928 there were thirty-nine Sumatra Thawalib schools in the region.)[79] Padang Panjang became a fount of dynamism. At the Thawalib, Rasul himself taught the older students in his inimitable question-and-answer style and led open seminars every Thursday afternoon, during which he took up urgent issues such as playing the lottery (gambling), bank interest, and the *adat*. He also taught religious lessons at the Dutch Normal School in Padang Panjang and, on Sundays and Thursdays, held open public meetings of religious instruction. Hamka tells us that his father's influence extended from elites to the general public.[80]

Yet even the forceful and esteemed Haji Rasul could not dominate or control all the intellectual energy his school was fostering, especially in the heated excitement of the times. H. Dt. Batuah, for example, was one of Rasul's loyal students and an experienced religious teacher. Following a trip to Java during which he met Haji Misbach, a religious scholar who had embraced Communism, and other leaders of the colony's nascent Communist movement, Batuah returned to Minangkabau determined to spread the new ideology.[81] Sumatra Thawalib students were ripe for political activism, having been primed in part by another of Rasul's protégés, Zainuddin Labai, a popular instructor and a passionate promoter of Mustapha Kemal and his radical modernizing reforms in Turkey.[82] Batuah and other young Communists knew little of Marxism, but

they hated the Dutch and "capitalism-imperialism" in general. They framed their movement in Islam, calling it "revolutionary Islam" and "Communist Islam," and cited the harshest passages of the Qur'an and Hadith to instill hatred for non-Muslims and for government by infidel foreigners.[83] Their ideas, writes Hamka, spread among students "like a house burning in the hot season."[84]

In confronting this new challenge, Rasul resorted to Jamal al-Din al-Afghani's conclusion that Marxism opposed all religions. "Without thinking about it any deeper," writes Hamka, Rasul began issuing *fatwa*s against Communism.[85] He soon found himself in the center of a storm of scorn and ridicule. Stirred by the Communists, angry students accused him of oppressing the people, of enriching himself with fees and gifts, and of being a tool of the Dutch. Hamka remarks that his father, so accustomed to controversy, had never encountered such opposition.[86]

For a time, Rasul stood his ground. He didn't support the Dutch regime, he said, but he didn't think politics offered the right way to oppose it. The right way to defeat nonbelievers came from believers becoming stronger believers.[87] Jailed in 1923, Batuah was subsequently sent into exile. The Communist movement in Minangkabau surged on until 1927, when it was utterly crushed by the Dutch following an open revolt in West Sumatra and Java.[88] By this time, Rasul had already retreated, and Hamka barely mentions the rebellion in *My Father*.[89] Wounded by the personal attacks and by a loss of respect (and by the premature death in 1924 of Zainuddin Labai), in 1925 Rasul traveled again to Java. There once again he witnessed the vitality and success of Muhammadiyah and its network of schools, orphanages, poorhouses, and clinics. He also noted approvingly that, due to Muhammadiyah, many more women living in devout communities were covering their hair "in accordance with religious law [*hukum agama*]."[90]

Upon returning to Sumatra, Haji Rasul began his historic campaign to introduce Muhammadiyah in Minangkabau.[91] Meanwhile, in 1926 he joined a blue-ribbon delegation to the World Islamic Congress at al-Azhar University in Egypt, held in the wake of Ibn Saud's conquest of the Hejaz in 1925 and in the midst of urgent debates about the future of the caliphate.[92] Both Abdullah Ahmad and Haji Rasul received honorary degrees from the renowned university and were greeted as heroes when their returning ship docked at Medan. Word soon reached them of a catastrophic earthquake at Padang Panjang. They sped home to find Rasul's home and the Iron Bridge School in ruins. Rasul gathered up his unharmed family and made his way back to Lake Maninjau.[93]

Haji Rasul remained at the lake for the next fifteen years, reestablishing his prayerhouse school and building a small library near his lakeside house at Muara Puah. In these familiar surroundings, he recentered himself. Hamka

describes Rasul's daily routine as guided by Islam's hallowed prayer cycle: *subuh*, *lohor*, *azar*, *magrib*, and *isya*:

> After performing his nighttime prayers in the library, and before the sun rose, he went to the prayerhouse. When the drum sounded, the villagers flocked to pray together at Muara Puah. All that could be seen were the swaying coconut-frond torches of people descending from the hills to receive the blessing of praying with him. After the dawn prayer [*subuh*], the villagers dispersed to their workplaces—to the wet-rice fields, the fruit and vegetable gardens, or to the market to trade. Rasul returned to the library to write and study and to chant and read the Qur'an. His mouth was always moving silently because he recited the Qur'an completely each day. When noon approached he left the library and went to the front of the prayerhouse to measure the sunlight with a thread, to check the time. Then, momentarily, he signaled a youth standing by the prayer drum to sound it, indicating that *lohor* had come.[94]

After the noon prayers, Rasul retreated for lunch at the household of one of his wives and then napped until *azar*, the midafternoon prayer time, after which he read light books and magazines until twilight, or *magrib*. For most people, the twilight prayers break out into casual end-of-the-day socializing. But, as Hamka goes on, "even though the villagers and students now sat around the prayerhouse laughing and gossiping . . . [Rasul] enclosed himself in the *mihrab* [a niche of the mosque indicating the direction of Mecca] to complete his Qur'anic recitations until sunset. After saying the *isya* prayers he went home quickly and went straight to sleep—because at 3:00 a.m. he would rise again."[95]

Aside from his routine in Muara Puah, Haji Rasul kept up a heavy schedule of teaching in other lake district mosques and prayerhouse schools. He supported himself by writing books, which he carried with him to sell on frequent speaking tours throughout Sumatra.[96] Everywhere he went, he worked tirelessly to promote Muhammadiyah. By 1932 there were fifty-seven branches in West Sumatra alone.[97]

As Rasul grew older, he became less absorbed with such once-burning issues as whether or not one should say "Usalli" before praying or give religious instructions to the dead. Let's stop talking about who is the "young generation" and who is the "old generation," he said.[98] But it would be wrong to say that Rasul had softened. He became a notorious scold on the subject of unkempt mosques, and his obstinate views often prompted aggravation in Muhammadiyah circles.[99] Where women were concerned, writes Hamka, Rasul's ideas were wholly out of step with the new era represented by Aisyiyah, the Muhammadiyah-linked

women's organization that fostered leadership among Muslim women—not least in Rasul's own family: his daughter Fatimah led Aisyiyah in Minangkabau.[100] He declared, for example, that Aisyiyah members could not attend official meetings away from home unless accompanied by male relatives; that women could not attend prayers in an open field; that women had no authority to collect or distribute alms to the poor; and that because it did not cover a woman's entire body modestly, the then-fashionable "short *kebaya*" (short blouse, *baju kebaja pendek*) was *haram*—clothing fit only for prostitutes.[101] At the 1930 Muhammadiyah congress in Bukittinggi, Rasul prompted a crisis by pronouncing that an Aisyiyah member could not speak before an assembly that included men. Some two thousand Aisyiyah members attended the conference, and only the urgent intervention of K. H. Mas Mansur himself yielded a compromise: such an act was not *haram*, he concluded, only *makruh*—something that is not sinful but meritorious if avoided.[102] On this basis, the woman's speech was avoided.

Increasingly, Haji Rasul focused his anger on the Dutch, whose intrusion upon the realm of religion infuriated him. In 1928, for example, Rasul orchestrated a congress of two thousand *ulama*s in Bukittinggi to condemn Holland's attempt to impose the infamous Guru Ordinansi (teachers ordinance) in West Sumatra. Already in effect in Java, this ordinance required religious teachers to request permission from local officials before speaking in public.[103] In an improvised speech to the delegates—and to others present, including a senior Dutch advisor from the Department of Native Affairs, Dr. de Vries—Rasul pleaded with his fellow *ulama*s to unite in the face of Dutch intervention. "'Are you willing to unite?' he asked. 'Willing!' came the thundering answer" in Hamka's dramatic account. Then Rasul turned to de Vries and said, "Tell the high government not to impose the ordinance here. We are not divided anymore. We are united."[104]

Again in 1932 Haji Rasul led the outcry against the Ordinansi Sekolah Liar (wild school ordinance), which required government permission before any new private schools could be opened. In Dutch eyes, the Islam-driven Thawalib, Diniyah, and Muhammadiyah schools were hotbeds of subversion.[105] Virtually all sectors united against this imposition. Haji Rasul chaired the Komite Menolak Ordinansi Sekolah Liar (West Sumatra Wild School Ordinance Rejection Committee) despite whispered warnings that the Dutch were actively collecting evidence against him.

In fact, they were. Minangkabau was full of government spies and "note-takers" who innocently recorded what was said in meetings. Rasul was well aware of this practice and sometimes confronted the note takers openly. "Be

careful what you write," he warned. "Because this is not a passing matter. It will be reopened in the afterlife! Don't be a traitor with your note-taking."[106] (Years later, when the historian Alfian conducted his landmark research on the early history of Muhammadiyah, he found ample evidence of the work of such spies in the Dutch colonial archives.[107]) Despite such surveillance, Rasul took up the cudgels again and again, against a colonial ordinance requiring the civil registration of marriages (in addition to Muslim rites), against Dutch actions to appoint and dismiss *shari'a* judges, against new rules restricting villagers' access to forest reserves, and so on.[108]

By the late 1930s many of the colony's activist nationalists had been arrested and jailed or exiled, including several of Haji Rasul's own students and protégés. Rasul said repeatedly that he wasn't interested in politics. When in 1930 some of his former students formed the political party Persatuan Muslimin Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim Union, PERMI) on the basis of the Sumatra Thawalib and adopted the slogan "Islam and Nationalism," he objected, saying, "Only Islam." He was perfectly willing to stand up to the Dutch, he said, but "no politics, no Communism, no nationalism. Islam and, again, Islam!"[109]

From his prayerhouse school on the shores of the lake, Rasul remained at the center of anti-Dutch agitation in Minangkabau throughout the 1930s. The Dutch repeatedly called him in for warnings from white officials; other members of his family, including one of his wives, were also harassed; a son, Hamka's half brother, was arrested for writing a seditious tract and died in jail. In early 1941, when German armies had already occupied Holland and the situation of the Indies was perilous, the Dutch Assistant Resident himself pulled up to Haji Rasul's prayerhouse in a car to arrest him.[110] Despite an outcry in the press and even in the colonial Volksraad (People's Council), he was exiled to Java, where he lived under house arrest until the Japanese arrived. By way of explanation, the Dutch announced simply that "neither the authority of the legal government nor the customary laws of the people can be executed any longer in a region that he [Haji Rasul] occupies."[111] Busy attending a Muhammadiyah conference in Aceh, Hamka heard about his father's exile over the radio.[112]

Hamka completed the first draft of *My Father* during the Japanese occupation but continued to add stories and facts during the revolution. In 1930, he said, his father had gathered the descendants of Tuanku Kisai and laid out the family genealogy. Hamka saved his father's notes from the meeting and used them in writing his book. He also gleaned some personal information from a secret diary his father kept—also in Arabic.[113] It seems likely, moreover, that for some subjects, such as the history of the Padri movement and other nineteenth-century topics, Hamka may have drawn on books or articles or other written

sources. (We know he was a voracious reader, and he says that he knew more about the Padris than his father did. But he doesn't mention these sources, and there is no bibliography aside from a list of his father's books.)[114] Yet *My Father* is chock-full of facts and long passages listing names and places, giving it the feel of authority.

By and large, Hamka seems to have gathered the materials for his father's biography by talking to people—like the old woman he met during the war who told him, "Your father once ate here, sitting in the same chair you are sitting in"—and then drawing upon his notes of these conversations and his own prodigious memory to assemble his facts and stories.[115] He tracked down his father's old friends and colleagues. Occasionally we see him in the act, as in the conversation he records between himself and one Shaykh Ibrahim bin Musa about his father's role in agitating against the wild school ordinance: "Shaykh Ibrahim bin Musa said to me: 'So I gave the news to your father. I didn't leave out a word.' 'And what did he answer?' I asked Shaykh Ibrahim Musa." Hamka then reports the *shaykh*'s account of his full exchange with Haji Rasul in quotation marks as though captured word for word.[116] We understand, of course, that this is Hamka's *memory* of the reported conversation. This is the nature of the book at large.

In *My Father*, Hamka sought to capture Haji Rasul as the Big Man that he was and to record his very considerable accomplishments—his role in the Great Story, in other words. We learn a lot about what Hamka admired in his father: his discipline, his rapier intelligence and rhetorical skills, his courage, and his single-minded devotion to Islam. But Hamka also tried to give his readers a portrait of Rasul that reflected him truly, humanly. We learn small things. Rasul loved cigarettes and spicy food and coffee spiked with a raw egg. He loved cats. He was obsessed with neatness and washed and mended his own clothes. He suffered from asthma and hemorrhoids.[117] We also learn that he was overbearing, arrogant, and inflexible. And often angry.[118] Hamka tells us that Rasul's tantrums were notorious and that when he was in a spitting rage, words—indeed, "passages from the Qur'an and Hadith, poems, and Arabic proverbs, among other things"—flew out of his mouth with terrifying fluency.[119] Sometimes, in a fury, he beat his students. Hamka was terrified of him.[120]

In a short passage at the end of the biography titled "His Family," Hamka reveals yet another side of his father. Hamka's mother, Safijah, was Rasul's third wife. After Safijah, he married *ten* other women. Hamka names them all, describing six of them this way: "He married several other times, but not for long. When he was teaching in Padang (Dalimah and Upik Djapang), in Padang Panjang (Saerah, Gadis, Latifah), and in Kapas Pandji Banuhampu

(Fatimah)."[121] Although he doesn't mention it in his account of his father's second return from Mecca in 1906, in this back-of-the-book section Hamka inserts a second wife, Hindun, between Rasul's first, Raihanah, who died in Mecca, and his third, Safijah, Hamka's mother. Rasul remained married to Hindun, alongside other women, until she died in 1944—that is, for thirty-eight years.[122] Unlike Hamka's own mother, however, who was a member of an important matrilineal clan, Hindun is denied a lineage in *My Father*; he says nothing about her family background.[123]

Rasul's penchant for wives—a habit of his own father and grandfather and other prominent *ulama*s of the times—led, of course, to divorce, since as a Muslim man he was permitted by the Qur'an to be wed to only four women at any one time. So it came to pass that in 1920 Rasul divorced Safijah.[124] This event is mentioned only in passing in *My Father*. But Hamka takes it up again in his own soon-to-follow memoirs, in which we see Haji Rasul through the more intimate eyes of an often-troubled son.

Son

In Hamka's *Memoirs*, Rasul is austere and often absent. Hamka writes that he spent most of his childhood days with his mother, Safijah, at the lakeside. Here, evidently, Rasul kept three wives and took turns visiting each one.[125] These wives, in turn, took turns joining Rasul when he went to reside away from the lake in Padang and Padang Panjang, where he kept other wives and where his sisters and their children also often joined him. (By Minangkabau custom, Rasul was the all-important *mamak*, or "maternal uncle," to his sisters' children.)

Hamka's mother, Safijah, was only sixteen when she gave birth to Hamka. He describes her as a cross, scolding mother who punished him by striking him and pinching him and twisting his ear painfully.[126] He found succor with her parents, especially his grandfather, around whom almost all of his happy memories as a small child revolve. Hamka loved to follow his grandfather to the local spot where the river meets the lake to fish and swim and play and to listen to his grandfather's poems, songs, and ghost stories. "At these times," he writes, speaking of himself in the third person, "there was no one on earth happier than he was . . . the two of them ambling through the rice fields, disappearing and appearing again amid the yellow paddy."[127] As they approached home, however, his happiness faded, "because he already had a feeling his mother would be mad at him. And his heart beat even faster if his father happened to be taking his turn with his mother."[128] He candidly admits that, as a

boy, fear more than love characterized his feelings for his father. Indeed, "everyone was afraid of his [Hamka's] father's anger."[129]

When Hamka began spending some of his time in his father's household outside of Maninjau, his mother did not necessarily come along. Haji Rasul had to allocate his attention among each of his wives carefully; the honor of their clans was at stake, not to mention household peace. So each year at Ramadan, when all families gathered at the lake, Rasul would bring home one wife and leave with another.[130] This rotation, as well as tensions arising among his father's wives and between each of them and his sisters (and their children), led to constant bickering about who had the greater right to Haji Rasul's attention and resources.[131] In these shifting domestic arrangements, Hamka was often living and playing alongside siblings, half-siblings, and cousins, each with a different claim upon Rasul. To Hamka, Rasul was father, but to the cousins, he was the all-important *mamak*. Hamka says that even his very strong father could not solve this problem. The inevitable domestic war of insults, sneers, and spiteful exchanges bred misery and insecurity. "This is what our friend [Hamka] witnessed, heard, saw, experienced, and suffered," he writes, "every day since the moment he first opened his eyes in this world."[132]

One day in Padang Panjang, when Hamka was twelve, he overheard his maternal grandparents pleading with his father. "Guru Haji, Guru Haji!" they said. "Why are you abandoning your children?"[133] His father had divorced his mother. Rasul soon called for him and asked him to choose: "If I divorce your mother, who will you stay with? Who will you follow?"[134] Hamka doesn't answer. He suddenly realized, he says, that his future—his lessons, his religious education—was in doubt. Like many children of divorce, he dreamed that his parents would reunite. When they didn't, he blamed the quarreling clans and the vaunted *adat*, or customs. "Because of the [Minangkabau] social structure," he writes, "because of *adat*, it was as though his own father wasn't his father anymore."[135]

The family split. Hamka remained with Rasul along with his elder sister, Fatimah, and one younger brother. His other younger brothers, Safijah's two other sons with Rasul, remained with her. Ten months later, Safijah married a well-to-do Minangkabau merchant in Deli. Hamka saw her only intermittently after that, evidently. She returned to the lake a year later with her new husband. In a book full of names, Hamka never names his stepfather. Safijah had five children with her new husband and died at the age of forty-two in 1934.[136]

Hamka's formal education began at the feet of his father, where, terrified at the age of ten, he learned to identify and pronounce the Arabic letters. Haji

Rasul then taught him his prayers and began to guide him in reading the Qur'an. (Hamka also had Qur'an lessons from his sister, Fatimah, who got so impatient with him that she sometimes bit him.)[137] When Rasul's student Zainuddin Labai opened the modern-style Diniyah School in Padang Panjang in 1916, his father enrolled him there for afternoon classes; in the morning he attended the local government-run village school (known as Desa School).[138] But when Rasul converted his Iron Bridge School in Padang Panjang into the Sumatra Thawalib in 1918, Hamka shifted there from the village school, an event that followed his lakeside circumcision. He now spent mornings at the Diniyah School and afternoons in religious instruction at the Thawalib.[139] He attended these schools in Padang Panjang during the turbulent year of his parents' divorce in 1920. Hamka describes himself as a fast learner but a lazy one who was often in over his head in his religious classes, not to mention highly distracted by the ambient pleasures of Padang Panjang.[140]

"Our young friend," as he calls himself, became adept at peeling away from home and school as often as possible to lark about town. In the late mornings, after his class at Diniyah School but before lunchtime and his afternoon classes at the Thawalib, and in the evenings between the twilight and sunset prayers (*magrib* and *isya*)—and on at least one occasion when he skipped school altogether for fifteen days—he and his pals slipped away to play at martial arts, fly kites, watch steer fights and football games (featuring the Padang Native Eleven), and peek through a peephole in the wall of the local cinema to watch silent films such as *The Iron Claw*.[141] (Eventually on to their tricks, the theater staff smeared the peephole with chicken dung, leading to endless joking among the boys.)

When on his own, however, Hamka's most likely destination was the Zainaro, a lending library set up by Zainuddin Labai. Here Hamka found the early Malay-language books of the Balai Pustaka (the Bureau for Public Reading), including novels by the colony's first-generation Minangkabau novelists, such as Marah Rusli and Abdul Muis. Here also were Chinese-Malay renderings of Chinese stories and translations of European novels such as *The Three Musketeers* and *The Count of Monte Cristo*. Here, too, Hamka found newspapers of the day, including *Bintang Hindia* of Abdul Rivai, *Chahaya Sumatra*, and *Sinar Sumatra*.[142] Hamka says he used all the spending money his father gave him to rent books and, when this wasn't enough, did odd jobs at a printing company operated by Zainuddin Labai's business partner. This off-limits reading—his father disapproved of it—marked the beginning of Hamka's self-education. "By reading these books," he writes, "worlds he hadn't known before opened up in his imagination."[143]

To pry him away from such diversions, Rasul sent Hamka off to another religious academy in Parabek, an out-of-the-way town four kilometers from Bukittinggi. Here Hamka found the Qur'anic lessons just as difficult, but he enjoyed being free of the "harsh supervision of his father."[144] Living away from the family, he learned to cook his own rice and simple meals. He discovered that he made friends easily and soon explored the village life around Parabek, charming the old women (who gave him treats) and joining the men for turtle-dove fights. Such events were ritual occasions, and Hamka found himself in awe of the speeches that elders made before and after the fights, with their "beautiful words so neatly arranged."[145] He memorized them. After a few months, he says, he left Parabek and returned to the lakeside. To his father's consternation—"At your age, I was already in Mecca," he would say—Hamka devoted himself to reading and to learning ritual speeches, poems, and lore from the local elders, including his own *mamak*, Datuk Rajo Endah. It was probably at this time that Hamka was confirmed with his first Minangkabau title, Datuk Indomo of the clan Tanjung.[146]

Under pressure to return to his schooling in Padang Panjang and to his father's household there, and with "his imagination soaring," Hamka now made an impetuous break for freedom.[147] Without telling his father, he set out for Java. In Bengkulu, however, he was stricken by smallpox and had to be taken in by relatives. He returned to Maninjau so scarred that his face looked like "a water buffalo turd struck by rain," as some unkind villager told him. Former friends didn't recognize him.[148] This only strengthened his resolve to "believe in himself." Not long afterward he managed to confront his father with the words: "I want to go to Java, *abuya*."

"Why do you want to go there?"

"To study."

"What exactly will you study there? If it's religion, Java's not the place, but here in Minangkabau." But Rasul then deftly opened a door. "But perhaps you are going to your brother-in-law's in Pekalongan," he said, referring to Sutan Mansur, Rasul's trusted protégé and now husband to Hamka's sister, Fatimah.

"Exactly," said Hamka, "that's my intention."[149]

Soon prayers were said, and Hamka embarked on his first trip outside Sumatra. Ten years passed before he studied with his father again.[150]

Hamka's urge to get away was certainly personal. But it was also in keeping with the common Minangkabau practice of *merantau*, in which young men set out to seek their fortunes and accrue worldly knowledge outside the Alam; some return home eventually, and others remain permanently in the Minangkabau diaspora. (Virtually all the leading male protagonists in Hamka's

storyscape—including Leman, Zainuddin, Sofjan, and "you-are-a-modern-man" Musa—were "on the *rantau*.")[151]

When Hamka first set off on the *rantau* in 1924, the Dutch East Indies was gripped in a wave of political agitation. In Minangkabau, Haji Rasul was angrily fending off Communism among his own students and teachers at the Sumatra Thawalib. In Java, organized reformers and political activists were astir on all fronts.[152] Hamka immersed himself. He did eventually reside with Sutan Mansur for half a year, absorbing from his brother-in-law (who became Hamka's lifelong friend and mentor) the new "spirit of Islam" as propagated by Muhammadiyah.[153] But before then he made the rounds in Java, lodging with locally resident Minangkabaus and seeking out important movement leaders. "I studied 'Islam and Socialism' with H. O. S. Cokroaminoto," he writes, "sociology with Surjopranoto, and Tauhid [monotheism] with H. Fachruddin."[154] In Yogyakarta his own paternal uncle Ja'far Amrullah introduced him to people like Ki Bagus Hadikusumo, with whom he studied Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*) and who helped him become a member of Sarekat Islam, even though, at sixteen, he was two years under age. The fiery public speaker and Sarekat Islam leader Cokroaminoto impressed him deeply. He describes a public meeting in Pekalongan where the Communists attacked religion as "the opium of the masses," after which Cokro rebutted their slurs one at a time. "Since that time," he writes, "that great leader has greatly influenced the spirit of our young man."[155]

Hamka began to fancy himself a rousing preacher and public speaker and took the floor at every opportunity.[156] Meanwhile, he was reassessing his past education and perspective. In Minangkabau, Islam was entrenched, and the *ulama*s were obsessed with trivial matters of proper practice. In Java, Islam was under threat. Unlike in Sumatra, where the surging Communists spoke in a Muslim vocabulary, in Java they scorned religion of all kinds. This was the true Communism, he came to see (just as his father had warned him). Moreover, in Java, Christian missionaries supported by the colonial government were making inroads. Then there was "Javanese religion," a fusion of Islam and ancient Hindu-Buddhist elements that prevailed everywhere except the neighborhoods of the most pious Muslims.[157] For these reasons, Java's Muslim leaders had developed an awareness that most in Sumatra had not. From them he learned that "Islam is a struggle, a dynamic conviction." It is "a living thing."[158] With all of these issues on his mind, Hamka returned home to the lake in June 1925.

Hamka's account of his formative year in Java was written in 1950, in the early days of Indonesian independence. In it he framed his own coming-of-age

story within the larger story of Indonesia's coming of age. It is not surprising that he emphasized his early connections to some of the big figures of the times, including the by-then-iconic Cokroaminoto. How closely he studied with these men and for how long isn't quite clear. What matters is the attachment of his name to theirs in history—the history he is writing. Hamka's device of writing his memoirs in the third person, speaking of "our young friend," for example, is perhaps a way of drawing readers into the story vicariously.[159] This technique of embedding his personal story within larger ones can be seen even more dramatically in the next dramatic episode of Hamka's life: his pilgrimage to Mecca.

Java had stirred him up, he says. By the time he got home, his father had already begun establishing Muhammadiyah in Maninjau and Padang Panjang. Hamka threw himself into the effort, moving back and forth repeatedly between the lake and Padang Panjang to give courses and speeches. At his father's school, he launched a course on preaching and public speaking (*tabligh*) and in 1925 published a small collection of his students' sermons called *Khatib al-Ummah* (The ummah's scribe), his first publication. Meanwhile, through newspapers such as *Hindia Baru* (The new Indies), led at this time by Haji Agus Salim; *Bendera Islam* (Islam's flag); and *Seruan Azhar* (Azhar's call) from Egypt, he kept abreast of the political whirlwinds in the Middle East, where Ibn Saud had captured the Hejaz, Mustapha Kemal was freeing Turkey, and Egypt was achieving independence under Sa'ad Zaghlul Pasha.[160]

A series of small setbacks, however, threw him into a dark spell. A marriage that his family arranged for him fell through. He was passed over for a teaching job at a village school. His father told him that all his reading and speechmaking "was useless."[161]

Overwhelmed with bad feelings, Hamka decides again to flee. His secret plan is to make the pilgrimage, but he tells people only that he is going someplace far away. His loving grandmother sells some kapok pods to give him traveling money. He walks the winding road of forty-four bends from the lake up to Padang Panjang. He makes his way to Bukittinggi and Padang and, aboard a ship, to Sibolga. He takes a car to Pematang Siantar, where a family friend named Esa gives him some money for the Hajj. He solicits more from Maninjau people living in Medan. (Quite a bit, in fact—five hundred guilders!) He buys his ticket, telegraphs his father, and, in early February 1927, boards the *Karimata*. He is off to Mecca.[162]

What follows is a classic pilgrim's tale. There is a shipboard flirtation, a rapacious *shaykh* (a pilgrimage guide, in this case), and episodes of confusion and embarrassment, triumph, and rapture. (At one point, Hamka and some

fellow pilgrims from the Indies are tricked into thinking they will have an audience with King Ibn Saud himself. A smiling official escorts them into a room, where they wait . . . and wait . . . and wait.)[163]

Hamka spent six months in Arabia. He describes himself as the unofficial leader of a group of young activists from Muhammadiyah and Sarekat Islam who organized hajj classes for ignorant pilgrims from the Indies. Hamka taught these classes himself and was gratified when grateful students pressed coins into his hand as they left. Like all pilgrims, he had striking encounters, such as the Afghan tribesmen who shared their food and water with him during a harrowing trek across the desert, and the soldiers of Ibn Saud who told him that the guns they carried were "for shooting the English."[164]

Halfway through his stay in Arabia, Hamka ran out of money—most of his five hundred guilders went for his ticket and his *shaykh*'s fees. For two months he worked in a printing press run by Arab relatives of Ahmad Chatib, his father's old mentor, and then it was time for the hajj itself. On the critical second day, when all pilgrims gather on the Plain of Arafat to present themselves to God, saying "Labbayka Allahumma Labbayk!" (I'm ready, my God, I'm ready), Hamka was draped over a camel saddle in his tent, desperately ill and moaning in pain. But he, too, says, "I'm ready, my God, I'm ready," imagining that he might die right there in the heat of the plain.[165] His thoughts turn homeward to his family and friends, and "he remembers the house where he was born, with its roof of thatch and zinc. He remembers the nutmeg tree that grew behind the house that he climbed over and over again as a boy. And the mango trees by the lake where he and his younger brother Kudus played and sang their hearts out."[166] Hamka swoons and is awakened later by his companions, who hoist him onto a camel. In the moonlight, he writes, the huge caravan of camels, horses, donkeys, and walkers "flow toward Mina."[167] Early the next morning, somewhat recovered, he throws stones at the white pillars of Mina that represent the devil, and soon his head is shaved. With that, he is a haji.

Back in Mecca, the pilgrims walk together seven times around the Ka'ba, pray at the grave of Abraham, and run seven times back and forth between the hills of Safa and Marwah, completing the pilgrimage rituals.[168] Suddenly, writes Hamka in a passage that immediately refocuses his readers on Indonesia, everyone is talking of home: "Haji Daeng Masarapi from Bugis speaks of his boat; because of this, he must get home. Haji Wongsopawiro . . . talks about his batik business in Solo. . . . Haji Kartodimedja talks about his vast rice paddies in Garut and his fish ponds in Tasikmalaya. Haji Masran of Banjar and his cousin Haji Syukri of Tembilahan need to return right away. Return!"[169]

Hamka wasn't so sure, however. His own father and grandfather had spent years in Mecca. Why not stay behind to study and teach? He writes that he brooded about this for some time until Haji Agus Salim convinced him to go home. "It would be better," Salim advised, "to develop yourself in your own country."[170] (By invoking Haji Agus Salim, Hamka was again placing himself alongside a figure who, by the early 1950s, had attained iconic status in the new Indonesia.) Hamka sailed aboard the *Buitenzorg* for fifteen days before sighting Sabang, the westernmost island of the Indies, or "our country." From there it was a short trip to Medan, where he disembarked to begin his renewed life as *Haji* Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah.

Hamka did not, as one might expect, hurry home to celebrate. Instead, he lingered in Medan writing articles about the hajj for the Chinese-run daily *Pelita Andalas* and for other publications in Sumatra and Java. This was his first work as a professional journalist, although he didn't earn much—in fact, he explains, his honorarium from *Pelita Andalas* was an occasional cup of coffee from a nearby Chinese coffee shop.[171] In these early articles, Hamka wrote candidly about his pilgrimage, with harsh words for the Saudi authorities, Arabs, and Indonesian pilgrims alike. Arabia was in complete disorder, he said, and everyone insisted on bribes, including nurses in the kingdom's filthy hospitals (who would not bring food otherwise). Even the gatekeeper to the Ka'ba demanded money from believers wishing to enter the holy site. Meanwhile, Arab con men scammed ignorant pilgrims from the Indies with demands for donations to spurious "descendants of the Prophet." On board the ship, he wrote, Indies pilgrims behaved like "jungle people," throwing trash and defecating indiscriminately. Women, flagging from the stupendous heat in the holds of the pilgrim ship, opened their clothing in scandalous ways. Unlike the account in his *Memoirs*, crafted more than twenty years later, there is no golden glow here.[172]

He also wrote, for the first time, about the Sumatra Thawalib and the reform movement in Minangkabau of the early 1920s led by his father, sensing early the historical importance of this movement, a subject to which he would return repeatedly throughout his life. It was in these early articles that Hamka found his voice as a journalist and, as has been noted, his to-be-famous name.

Turning aside entreaties to visit Maninjau, Hamka now found work as a religious teacher on a Deli plantation on the outskirts of Medan. His four months in Deli made a lifelong impression. Here, he wrote later, "I observed and I lived among small-time traders, and I witnessed and saw for myself the lives of contract coolies bound by the notorious Penal Sanction [law] of the

times." Here also he witnessed the "assimilation of peoples" that so gripped his imagination in the year of the Youth Oath, in which elite Indies young people declared their loyalty to "one country, one nation, and one language."[173] All of this material became fodder for his novel *Migrating to Deli* and other works of the 1930s.

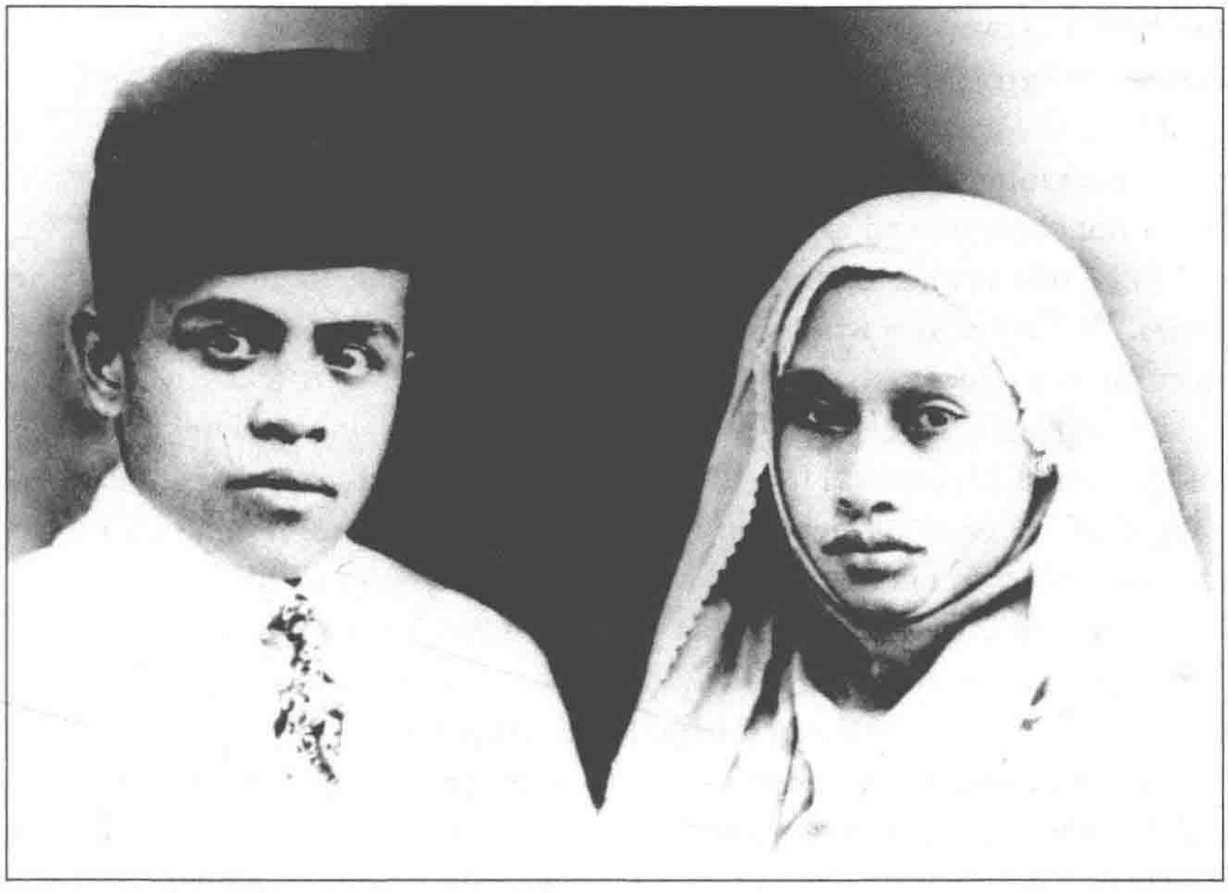
Hamka might well have remained in Deli indefinitely. But Haji Rasul sent Sutan Mansur to bring him home. A reunion of tearful affection occurred at the lakeside as Haji Rasul welcomed his wandering son, a haji, home.

> "Where is your turban?" he asked. "Where are your robes?" alluding to the ceremonial garb of returning hajis.
>
> "I didn't have the money to buy them," Hamka answered. Haji Rasul took his own turban and robes from the cabinet and gave them to his son. As villagers kissed Hamka's head and neck and salaamed respectfully, Rasul escorted the new haji to the village mosque and invited him to say the Friday sermon. This pleased everyone, because they knew that if the revered Haji Rasul were to die, "there was already a son to replace him."[174]

Later that evening, in the quiet hours following the sunset prayers, Hamka's uncle Haji Yusuf, one of his father's brothers, took him aside for a private talk. "Malik," he said, "put your father at ease. He's getting old." Then, "You have been betrothed to the daughter of Endah Sutan. Siti Raham is her name. . . . Think it over for a day or two."[175]

The latter comment, notes Hamka, was purely rhetorical. A marriage had already been arranged, and family heirlooms had been exchanged. In brooding about this turn of events, Hamka remembered his flirtations with Kulsum on the ship to Mecca, and the Arab girl named Maryam who begged him to marry her in Arabia, and the unnamed Dutch-educated girl from his own village who now lived in Medan and who—according to her older sister, their go-between—was "waiting for you."[176] Hamka no doubt dreamed of choosing his own wife.[177] But his father's will and the pressures of *adat* were too strong. Hamka was twenty-one. He married the fifteen-year-old Siti Raham and never anyone else until after her death in 1972. They raised ten children together; two others died in childhood. The first volume of Hamka's memoirs ends with their joyous wedding ceremony in April 1929, with Hamka in his haji robes and both his father and mother on hand at the lakeside.[178]

During the year leading up to his marriage, Hamka had written his first full books—*Si Sabariyah*, his Minangkabau true-crime melodrama, and a few short books on Muslim history and the role of women in Islam.[179] The second volume of Hamka's memoirs begins with the chapter "Where to Go?" and with his



Bride and groom: Hamka and Siti Raham, 1929. Courtesy of Irfan Hamka.

early years as a married man struggling to make a living as a writer and teacher in Padang Panjang. Here he writes of his involvement with his father's efforts to establish Muhammadiyah in Sumatra, which intensified when Sutan Mansur returned from Java to assume local leadership of the organization. Hamka himself established several chapters in outlying areas, he tells us, and beginning in 1928 served as chairperson of the Padang Panjang branch.[180] Through this dynamic organization Hamka began to develop an Indies-wide reputation. Its annual congresses drew members from the far corners of the Indies. The nineteenth congress of 1930, the first outside Java and the largest thus far, with more than fifteen thousand attendees, was held in Bukittinggi. Hamka landed a plum speaking assignment, very likely through the machinations of his brother-in-law. Even the Dutch took notice and recorded what he said.[181] The following year in Yogyakarta, he tells us (more than once), his speech to the twentieth congress brought the audience to tears.[182] He had already determined, he says, to dedicate his life to "the revival of the Muslim community" as a "propagator of Islam."[183]

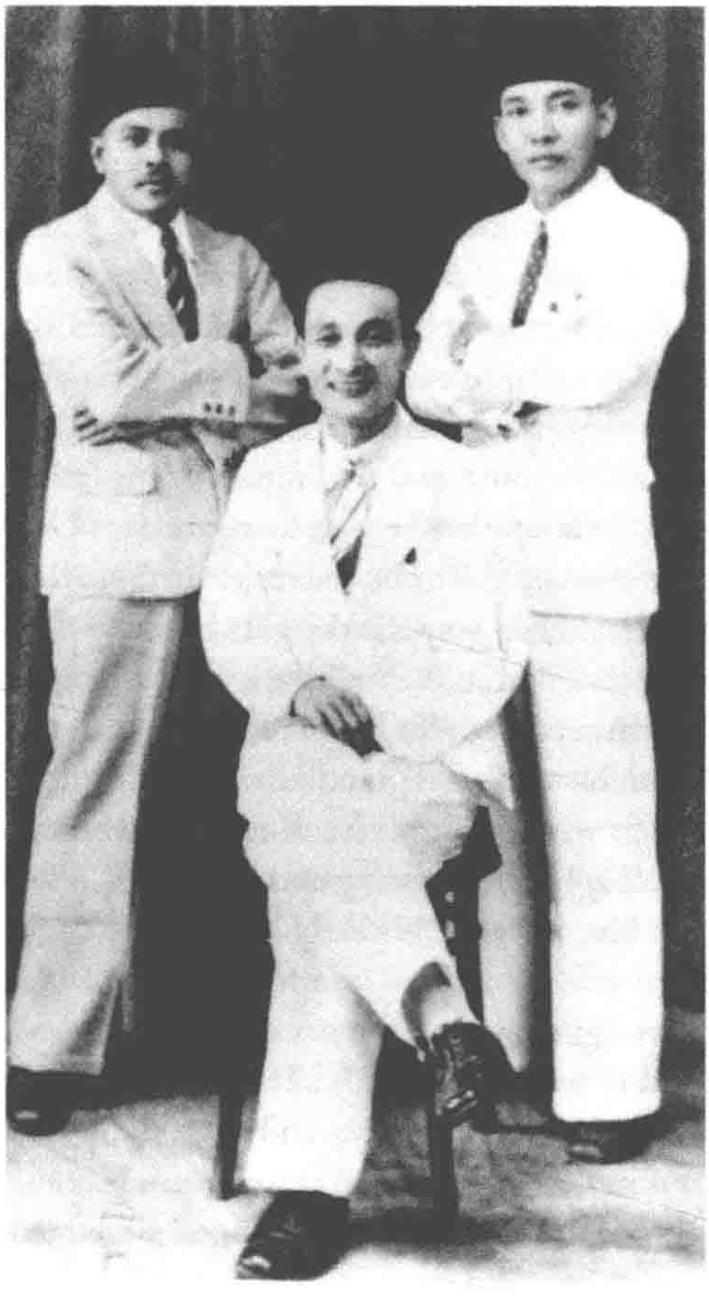
In 1931 Hamka was appointed Muhammadiyah's senior preacher and administrator (Mubaligh Besar) in Makassar, the bustling seaport city in

southern Sulawesi and a six-day journey by steamship from Padang. Here Hamka was greeted as a major religious scholar in his own right, a new experience for someone who had lived in the shadow of a famous father.[184] He used every spare minute either to study or to write, he explains.[185] He began to earn better honorariums and again attempted to publish a magazine, *Al-Mahdi*, for which he was at once editor, administrator, and writer. (It ran for only nine issues.)[186] This is also when he placed his rendition of the famous Arab love story *Laila Majnun* with the colonial government's Balai Pustaka—a coup.[187]

Having left his wife and a baby boy at home in Maninjau, Hamka was also on his own in Makassar. He writes that almost all of his supporters there had daughters—"beautiful teenaged girls," he says. These supporters entrusted their daughters to Hamka, often signaling that they were available as wives.[188] One of the girls openly propositioned him. All this frankly rattled him, and he writes that it was only after Siti Raham joined him in Makassar that he felt "at peace and free from the dangers of youthful temptations."[189]

Hamka implies that he might have remained indefinitely in Makassar had his son not fallen ill.[190] When the boy's condition worsened, Siti Raham insisted on going home, and in 1934 Hamka found himself again back at the lake. Here Hamka finally completed his education with his father. Each day for six months the two men, father and son, met at Haji Rasul's lakeside library to study the finer points of logic and law, reading together al-Ghazali's treatise on Muslim jurisprudence, *Al-Mustasfa fi 'ilm al-usul.* Hamka writes that his father instructed him for one hour each day, after which they "exchanged ideas passionately." His father, he writes, "looked proud."[191]

A personal complication followed this personal breakthrough. As Hamka embarked on the directorship of a Muhammadiyah-linked preaching academy in Padang Panjang, Haji Rasul broached the possibility that Hamka take a second wife, namely, the niece of one of Rasul's own wives, Hindun.[192] Rasul needed a caretaker. If the girl were Hamka's wife, it would be appropriate for her under the Muslim gender rules of *muhrim* to be in close personal contact with Rasul. This is how Rasul framed his request. Hamka had committed himself to a single wife and in 1929 had argued for monogamy in his book *Agama dan Perempoean* (Islam and women).[193] He well remembered his mother's tears when she was called upon to assent to Haji Rasul's taking another wife.[194] But he said nothing. Serendipitously, about this time he was invited to become editor in chief of *Society's Compass* in Medan. Leaping at the opportunity, Hamka merely asked his father's permission to move to the east coast entrepôt with his family to take up the new job. Rasul agreed and, as Hamka had hoped, said nothing more about the marriage.[195]



Hamka (*standing left*) with Sukarno and Oei Tjeng Hien (Abdul Karim Oei) (*seated*), 1941. Courtesy of Irfan Hamka.

As I have noted, Hamka's years in Medan as head of *Society's Compass* were remarkably fruitful, the years in which he placed his own stamp on an emerging public consciousness among the Dutch colony's reform-minded Muslim urbanites and created fiction that touched readers across the Indies. Considering the importance of *Society's Compass*, Hamka says surprisingly little about it in his early 1950s memoirs: one chapter only in which he frankly brags about the magazine's success and links it to leading nationalist figures. He tells the story of meeting Sukarno personally in Bengkulu in 1941 and includes a famous photograph of himself (uncharacteristically wearing a Western suit) with the exiled leader. Sukarno was a reader of *Society's Compass*, Hamka tells his readers. Indeed, after Sukarno's shift from Flores to Bengkulu in 1938, Hamka sent him a copy of every issue.[196]

Instead, Hamka dwells on his roots and great ambitions as a writer. Writers in Indonesia today are pioneers, he says, laying the foundations for the time when "illiteracy has been wiped out and books are published in the millions."[197] Politicians create the nation's superstructure, but it is writers who fill it in with beauty and feeling and ideas. They "grow as their own countries grow."[198] Of course, Hamka did not see himself as an ordinary writer but as a great one, a *pujangga*, or "bard," who scaled the heights of art and philosophy and religion. Like "Tagore of India or Iqbal of Pakistan . . . I aim to be 'Hamka of Indonesia.'"[199]

In discussing his roots as a distinctively Indonesian writer, Hamka does not elide the extensive religious training of his youth and the impact of his father and his father's disciples. And, man of religion that he was, he recognizes God as the ultimate source of all true inspiration.[200] But he makes clear that what thrilled him as a youth and as a young searcher were the delights of the spoken word in proverbs, stories, and ritual speech and in the multifarious possibilities opened up by the modern world of print and popular media. He speaks of the short rhyming *pantun*s he learned from his maternal grandfather and that boys in boarding houses regaled each other with at night. Each *pantun*, whether memorized or improvised, was a small wonder of beauty and order that often bore flashes of humor or insight. And he writes of his early love for the ritual speeches (*pidato adat*) that occurred when an elder rose to speak, or when families entered a new house or received guests, or on innumerable public occasions, such as the dove fights he loved to watch as a boy.[201] These speeches, he writes, were larded with sayings and proverbs and history and were composed in long poetic passages "so beautiful in their rhythms that we didn't become bored listening to them."[202] Such speeches were memorized and delivered extemporaneously by people who were often illiterate. As a boy, Hamka says, he sought out the local masters among the *adat* chiefs, studied their speaking styles, and wrote down the speeches themselves. These "became embedded in my soul," he writes, "one reason why I became a public speaker" and why his speeches were attractive and "sometimes rise and fall in wave-like cadences."[203]

Then there were all the stories and tales he heard as a youth, the sorts of stories that grandmothers tell their grandchildren at night when the lights are out. Some of these stories were well-known vernacular tales of yore published in Malay-language books, often using the old *jawi*, or modified Arabic alphabet; but others were new stories, renderings of contemporary crimes and tragedies as embellished by professional storytellers who plied the region's towns and villages spinning yarns and sometimes playing the flute or *rebab* (a two- or three-stringed lute). (As Hamka recovered from his circumcision at the lakeside in June 1918, his father brought in storytellers two nights in a row.)[204]

Hamka reveals that he based his own first foray into published fiction, *Si Sabariyah*, on a true crime that had occurred in his own lakeside village when he was nine. (Characteristically, he does not resist the temptation to retell the story, in which the mother-in-law of a young man unlucky in the diaspora maneuvers to replace him with someone more promising. In a fit of rage, the unlucky son-in-law kills Si Sabariyah, his faithful wife, and then stabs himself. He dies while being carried up the forty-four switchback turns that connect Lake Maninjau to the nearest town with a hospital.) Hamka took note of the melodrama's popular appeal and, as we have seen, never strayed far from the form.

Hamka often spoke about the electric impact of the Zainaro bookstore in Padang Panjang, where he read almost every book as a youth. Zainaro's polyglot offerings included books by Indies-bred Chinese writers, whose publications written in Chinese Malay included contemporary Indies-based stories and translations of popular Chinese epics. Alongside these works of vivid linguistic hybridity came older works in formal Malay and still published in Jawi. These included the famous tales (*hikayat*) of the Malay canon such as *Hikayat si Miskin* (Tale of a poor man) and *Hikayat Bakhtiar* (Tale of Bakhtiar), examples of the language's high literary style.[205] Reading these books and others published by Balai Pustaka, including translations of European classics and new writing by Indies writers such as Marah Rusli, Hamka says he developed an appreciation for "well-ordered language." He admired the style of Haji Agus Salim, whose Malay was "gentle, with wavy hints of Minangkabau."[206] Around such models, Hamka built his own distinctive style as a writer of modern Indonesian.

Yet another influence looms large in Hamka's formation as a writer. "If other writers and reporters of the time drew inspiration from Western literature, especially Dutch literature," he writes, "I plunged into Arabic literature."[207] Hamka learned Arabic as part of his religious education, but he admits that his early religious lessons really didn't interest him. Instead, he says, he memorized Arabic poems and read voraciously the works of Egyptian and other Arabic-language writers. Through them he learned much about the West. In the Arab world, he writes, "The works of Goethe, Shakespeare, Guy du Maupassant, Maxim Gorki, Anatole France, Pierre Loti, Charles Baudelaire, André Gide, André Maurois, Anton Chekhov, and others were transmitted and seized upon to enrich the Arab library."[208] By far his favorite was the Egyptian writer Musthafa Luthfi al-Manfaluthi, translator of several French novels, including Edmond Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* and Alexandre Dumas's *La Dame aux camellias*, which Hamka in turn rendered into Indonesian as *Margaretta Gauthier* when he was thirty-three—not to mention Alphonse Karr's *Sous les tilleuls* and

Manfaluthi's *Madjdulin*, which provided the storyline for Hamka's own *The Sinking of the* van der Wijck.[209] "It can be said, without forgetting others, that our Bung Haji [Hamka himself] was first to carry the influence of the modern Arab library into the library of Indonesia. It was he who brought Manfaluthi here."[210]

Hamka traces Arabic's lineage as a literary language, remarking on the perfection of the Holy Qur'an and the intellectual sophistication of Islam's golden age and its great thinkers, such as Ibn Rushd, Ibn Sina, al-Farabi, al-Ghazali, and Ibn Khaldun. Hamka then reprises, as he so often did, the story of Muslim civilization's decline into tyranny, fragmentation, and intellectual sterility and its defeat at the hands of the rising West, followed by its modern renewal, led by Al-Afghani and Abduh.[211] Their ideas sparked a renaissance in Egypt that was built upon a confident embrace of both Western thought and a renewed Islam. "Since then," Hamka writes, "Egypt was no longer merely a 'nest' of old books that comported with a time six hundred years ago. People [there] had begun to sample the literature and civilization of the West, to enhance and develop their own civilization and literature."[212] Egypt became a dynamic center of modern Muslim renewal, influencing "the entire world of Islam."[213] Its important thinkers could speak to the world through Arabic-language periodicals such as *Al-Hilal*, *Al-Muqtataf*, *Al-Risala*, *Al-Thaqafa*, *Al-Ma'rifa*, and *Al-'Irfan*.[214]

As editor of the 1930s *Society's Compass*, Hamka says, he strove to keep abreast of new Egyptian writers so as not to be "left behind."[215] In incorporating Western ideas, Egypt was ahead of Indonesia by half a century; it "had found a firm place upon which to stand."[216] This enabled it, through Arabic, to "'swallow' Maupassant, Gorki, Hemingway, to enter their souls and to bring them out again in an Arab and Muslim context—like a thousand years ago, when Greek philosophy was 'swallowed' by al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Ibnu Rushd and was brought forth again after having been 'Islamicized.'" In other words, he writes, these modern Egyptians and early Muslim philosophers had fathomed the ideas of others "in order to know who they were themselves."[217]

For us Indonesians, it is the same. "We are shaping a new world that isn't Eastern or Western," he writes. "Both Al-Firdausi and Shakespeare have become one in the estuary of Indonesia."[218]

By the time Hamka wrote these words in 1950, Indonesia itself had come into being. In the final two volumes of his memoirs, he records his own passage through the tumultuous decade separating the high-colonial world of the 1930s and the vexing early years of freedom in the 1950s.

3

Hamka-san and Bung Haji

"Don't panic!" Hamka had urged his readers in the final issue of *Society's Compass*. Yet, as he described what happened next in his memoirs years later, Hamka himself panicked in the chaos preceding the arrival of Japanese troops.

He was returning from Aceh on December 8, 1941, he explains, when someone approached his car at a rest stop and told him that Japanese forces had bombed Pearl Harbor. As he and his companions made their way across the vast paddy fields and rubber plantations of East Sumatra, Dutch soldiers inspected the car for Japanese passengers and, at a later checkpoint, confiscated the car itself, forcing them to make the final stretch of their trip by rail. The city of Medan was in an uproar. Amid inept last-minute attempts by the Dutch to prepare the city for attack, Japanese planes began bombing the airfield at Polonia, not far from Hamka's house.

"People in the city moved to the edge of the city," Hamka writes. "People on the edge of the city moved out to the villages. And those in the villages moved into the forest."[1] Caught up in the panic, Hamka hurriedly moved his wife and children to a rubber plantation in Tebing Tinggi, some sixty kilometers away. But after two days of no running water and "predatory mosquitoes," he sheepishly brought them back to their Medan neighborhood, where they remained throughout the war.[2]

In the uncertain period just before the Japanese invasion, a fifth column of Indonesian partisans organized by a certain Masubuchi Sahei began openly to stir up support for Japan. (Hamka discovered that one of his brothers was an active member.)[3] Meanwhile, Radio Tokyo broadcast propaganda every night, promising the release of Indonesians from colonialism and calling upon the people to greet the Japanese with two flags: Japan's Rising Sun and Indonesia's Red and White. "Everywhere," writes Hamka, "people had their flags ready."[4]

At a public meeting, the Dutch Resident spoke of Holland's resolve to defeat its enemies and "rise again." Residents of "this country," he said, should put politics aside and unite behind the Queen.[5] By this time, Holland itself had been occupied by Nazi Germany since May 10, 1940, for more than a year and a half. Dutch officials in the Indies had affiliated themselves with the Dutch government in exile in London. When an awkward silence followed the Resident's speech, Hamka stepped forward to speak for the Indonesians. He describes this delicate moment in his memoirs. On the one hand, he didn't want to appear a sycophant; given his troubled history with the colonial administration and his father's recent exile, he was hardly pro-Dutch. And he didn't want to place himself in jeopardy with the Japanese, whose arrival seemed imminent. On the other hand, along with many Indonesian nationalists, he had concluded that in a showdown between the Fascist powers and Western democracies he stood with the democracies. He had said so in the pages of *Society's Compass.* In his remarks, Hamka thanked the Resident for his call for unity. "We [Indonesians] embrace this advice; we will unite!" As for Holland's intention to go to war with Japan, he went on, "We have only one cry—that you succeed."[6] Framing his remarks this way, Hamka finessed his way out of an explicit pledge of loyalty to Holland. He explains that although the Dutch found his short speech rude, fellow Indonesian leaders praised him for it.[7]

Of course, this is how Hamka tells the story roughly ten years later, framing it in light of subsequent events. Why had he said anything at all? "This was a historic moment!" he writes. "If I managed to say just the right thing, my friends would be released from an awkward situation, and they would realize who I am!"[8] Hamka thus places his craving for public attention at the forefront in his telling of the war years, during which "our friend" will soon become "Hamka-san."

For everyone in the Indies, Japan's conquest of the colony brought a profound disruption. By March 1942, writes Jean Gelman Taylor, "the colonial state had vanished." In its place came military rule, demands for loyalty and sacrifice, and selective acts of terror. All of this "generated a climate of fear, but also excitement and possibility."[9] By the time Hamka recounted his wartime experiences in his memoirs, the occupation and its existential uncertainties were long since over, and he was eager to tell the story as an episode in his own pilgrimage from Native to Indonesian. Hamka took pains to place his account—as a highly visible collaborator with Japan, for example—within the larger narrative of Indonesia's independence struggle, in which Sukarno and Hatta and many others also collaborated with Japan. In the process, he described candidly an act of cowardice at war's end of which he was ashamed and that

badly damaged his reputation. This was embarrassing, but it allowed him to make his own version of the event the public version and, as he so dearly hoped, to redeem himself in his telling of the revolution that followed.

Hamka-san

As the Japanese noose tightened around Medan on March 12, 1942, the Dutch destroyed their own trains and oil tanks and the oil refinery nearby. Hamka describes the warning sirens and the fire and smoke and people rushing into once-off-limits sites to carry off discarded oilcans and roofing materials. By afternoon, the Dutch had retreated to their homes. Aside from some policemen patrolling the streets, "it felt like the government had ceased to exist."[10] Early the next morning, a Friday, Japanese soldiers entered the city riding bicycles along the main streets as sirens once more cried out. The Dutch now slipped away or remained huddled in their homes, and soon, he writes, the people were rushing into the streets shouting, "Banzai-Banzai."[11] In the looting that followed, Japanese soldiers moved quickly to reestablish order, firing directly into marauding crowds and displaying the heads of decapitated looters at the crossroads leading to the central market. "After that," writes Hamka, "the looting stopped in Medan."[12]

Only a day after the occupation began, the Japanese summoned Hamka to a meeting, where he found himself in the company of several other prewar Medan notables.[13] Following a speech by Masubuchi in which he enlisted their help in capturing the Dutch and confiscating their automobiles, the group agreed to form an Indonesian committee to serve as a bridge between the occupying army and the people. The committee began meeting regularly, says Hamka, but as the grip of the Japanese tightened, he and others drifted away. A month later, the committee was disbanded.[14] For a time, the Japanese terrified the populace into submission with capricious beatings and cruelty, and Medan's prewar leaders withdrew into their homes or fled the city altogether. "The city was deserted!" he writes.[15] Hamka now made a quick tour of outlying Muhammadiyah branches and then returned to Medan. His savings from his *Society's Compass* days were depleted, and his proposal to reopen the magazine was brushed off. To feed his family, he sent his younger brothers to buy pineapples and papayas, which they cut into slices and hawked in Polonia, where workers were enlarging the airfield.[16]

In the weeks and months to come, Hamka and other Muslim leaders in Medan trod carefully with the new occupiers and, through trial and error, developed strategies to deal with them. They averted an early crisis through a

clever maneuver. April 29, 1942, marked the birthday of Japan's emperor. All of Medan was expected to gather in the city's main square and to bow (*keirei*) in the direction of the royal palace in Japan. The Indonesian-language version of this order translated *keirei* as *sembahyang*, or "prayer." The city's *ulama*s caucused about what to do. If performing the *keirei* was a prayer—in effect, praying to the emperor—then Muslims would be in violation of their most fundamental belief. Hamka attributes the solution to a fellow *ulama*, H. Abdurrahman Sjihab.[17] Sjihab drafted a document signed by "the *ulama*s of East Sumatra" declaring that performing the *keirei* was *not* praying and did not require the deep palms-on-the-knees bow of Muslim ritual prayer, or *ruku*. He then led a delegation of *ulama*s dressed in impressive turbans and robes to meet with the Japanese.

Face-to-face with the officer in charge, Sjihab said, "You're not ordering us to pray and bow in the Muslim way tomorrow, are you?"

"No, not that," answered the officer.

"And this is sufficient?" said Sjihab, bending his chin to touch his chest. "And not this?" Sjihab performed the full *ruku*.

"No, no, not like that," answered the officer. "Just as you did a minute ago."[18] Sjihab then asked the officer to place his official "chop," or seal, on the document, which was soon reproduced by the thousands and spread throughout East Sumatra. The Japanese chop on the pronouncement from the *ulama*s of East Sumatra meant, in effect, that Muslims could in good conscience participate in Japanese ceremonies throughout the occupation.[19] Hamka himself would soon be participating in many of them.

Not long afterward, Hamka used a similar strategy to secure another significant victory. A new military governor, or *gunseibucho*, Lieutenant Colonel Nakagawa, called together the region's religious leaders. At the meeting, Hamka said: "Excellent sir, we are teachers from religious organizations. We pray together, we give lessons, and we draw our two hands to our chests in a sign of prayer. We are called Muhammadiyah, Wasliyah, and al-Ittihadiah. We gather people to tell them that stealing and looting is forbidden. May we carry on?"

"You may, you may," said Lieutenant Colonel Nakagawa.[20]

Hamka failed to get a letter with a chop, but on his own authority he composed the "Message from the Consul" to distribute across the province. In it, he invoked the *gunseibucho* by name, saying, "He has given Muhammadiyah permission to carry out its good work as always—to gather together for prayers, to give religious lessons, and so on. Moreover, he urges us to work more energetically to heighten the spirit of religion, in order to achieve victory in the War of Greater East Asia."[21] As Hamka hoped, no one dared challenge his official-sounding letter by taking it to the top.[22]

As a result of this strategy, writes Hamka, in East Sumatra, Muhammadiyah was unaffected by Japanese rules forbidding meetings larger than three people without explicit permission beforehand. Its meetings were not "meetings" (*rapat*) after all but lessons or Qur'an study sessions (*pengajian*) or preaching (*tabligh*). As a result, Muhammadiyah's gatherings were "lively and crowded, both in Medan and the branches."[23] Leaders allotted about a tenth of each session to praising the Greater East Asian War, the rest to *tauhid*—the "oneness of God." "People who attended understood this," he writes. As a result, Muhammadiyah attracted new members and grew stronger. Indeed, "it became a fortress." In contrast, the organization weakened badly in nearby Aceh and disbanded in Palembang.[24]

After about three months, General Tetsuzo Nakashima replaced Lieutenant Colonel Nakagawa as governor, or *chokan*. Hamka remembered Nakashima as a plump older man and former diplomat with a quiet, intelligent demeanor.[25] He remained in place until war's end. In their initial meeting, Hamka notes, he so impressed Nakashima that Nakashima invited him to be his advisor on religious affairs. Hamka soon found himself traveling by train to Aceh to investigate a passionate young religious teacher whose Islam-infused rebellion, or "holy war" (*perang sabil*), was raging in Lho Seumawe.[26] Teungku Abdul Jalil stirred his followers with talk that the Japanese were in fact the mysterious Ya'juj and Ma'juj, whose appearance in the Qur'an heralded the End.[27]

Hamka arrived in Lho Seumawe on the very day that Japanese soldiers killed Jalil and learned that, just two days before, ninety-eight of his followers had been massacred in their prayerhouse. The Acehnese *ulama*s were deeply troubled by the outbreak but had failed to convince Jalil to surrender. This impressed Hamka, who privately admired the young martyr. ("We have to admit that our faith isn't as strong as his," he comments to some Acehnese acquaintances.)[28] But in his report to Nakashima, Hamka omitted all of this and emphasized instead how the crude behavior of the Japanese occupiers—bathing naked in full view of Indonesians, requiring the *keirei*, egregious slappings and beatings—had inflamed the passions of the famously hot-blooded Acehnese.[29]

Hamka's willingness to undertake the dangerous trip to Aceh led Nakashima to say, "Your spirit is like the Japanese spirit," referring to him as Hamka-san.[30] Nakashima drew him into his circle, and word soon spread that "Hamka-san was a 'friend' of the *chokan*." Suddenly, and for the first time in his life, Hamka was close to power.[31]

His star rose quickly. In the large public ceremony marking the first anniversary of Japanese rule in Sumatra, Hamka was one of five local speakers who vocally praised Japan.[32] Soon afterward, he was selected to lead a delegation of

three East Sumatran *ulama*s to Singapore, where the Japanese were planning an all-Sumatra-Malaya conference of *ulama*s—another propaganda event. In his memoirs, Hamka describes how the Japanese scripted the whole affair beforehand, including the "Declaration of *Ulama*s" thanking Japan for freeing Asian Muslims from the grip of colonialism.[33] When a delegate from Aceh proposed adding a sentence stating "And we trust Japan's promise to promote Islam," a propaganda official rejected it as "political," Hamka writes, adding, "He knew an insinuation when he saw one, evidently."[34] The delegation complied and, to please their hosts, made a show of their Islamness by wearing colorful Arab-style robes and turbans. Back at the Sea View Hotel, however, they quietly compared notes. "We all agreed that this was nothing but a comedy. . . . One must play the game cleverly."[35]

Hamka moved quickly to seal his can-do reputation with Governor Nakashima. In June 1943 he organized an all-Sumatra assembly of Muslim leaders—a pageant of loyalty featuring East Sumatran sultans and princes, a parade of *ulama*s in turbans and robes, speech after speech, and files of marching youths. The Japanese authorities built a new ceremonial gate at the entrance to Medan's main square for the big event and bused in sixty thousand people from outlying areas. A Japanese propaganda team filmed the whole spectacle, including Hamka's own passionate speech exhorting his fellow Muslims to embrace Japan's war effort as their own, indeed, as a cause worth shedding blood for, "martyr's blood, the blood of *jihad*."[36] Hamka ended his exhortation saying, "Long live the Muslim community under imperial Japan's protection."[37] (Thirty-five years later, Yunan Helmy Nasution remembered having bicycled fifty kilometers as an eighteen-year-old boy to attend the mass meeting in Medan to hear Hamka, the famous "*Ulama* Agitator."[38]) In the glossy memorial volume published soon afterward, Hamka is revealed as the event's primary mover and shaker.[39] "Thousands upon thousands of people in Sumatra and Malaya" witnessed films of his speech, he explains.[40]

After this, "Hamka-san couldn't withdraw into the background anymore."[41] A few months later, when Japan formed a quasi-representative advisory council in East Sumatra, the Shu Sangi Kai, Governor Nakashima appointed Hamka as a member. By this time, people knew him as the governor's "Golden Boy."[42]

Being close to power appealed to Hamka, but he knew that he was playing "a dangerous game," as he stresses in his memoirs. He took the risks, he says, to "lessen the dangers facing Islam" but also, as he repeatedly acknowledges, to advance the cause of his particular vision for Islam in Indonesia's future.[43] This was the Islam of Muhammadiyah and its like-minded affiliates, the

reform-oriented modern Islam of the *kaum muda* (young generation) that he had embraced at his father's knee and had promoted in his famous magazine, *Society's Compass*. Hamka called it "movement [*pergerakan*] Islam."[44]

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s and now in the early 1940s, certain sectors of East Sumatra had proved hardily resistant to the movement, namely, the populations of the region's residual mini-kingdoms who remained loyal to their sultans and rajas. In Deli, Langkat, Asahan, Serdang, and Siak, puppet kings and their in-house *ulama*s still wielded authority in the realm of religion and remained at the pinnacle of the Native feudal hierarchy despite having forfeited their sovereignty to the Dutch and, subsequently, the Japanese—a matter in which they had little choice but had nonetheless managed to turn to their personal benefit. In Hamka's eyes, these residual kingdoms constituted bastions of feudal privilege, colonial collaboration, and social conservatism whose reactionary religious officials personally resisted the inroads of the movement. In other words, Hamka viewed the sultans and their *ulama*s as "the other side" in a power struggle that, in the greater scheme of things, mattered more to him than the fight between the Japanese and the Dutch. This was the struggle over the character of Indonesian society itself.[45]

Hamka notes frankly that he attempted to use his influence with the Japanese both to promote Muhammadiyah and its allies and to thwart the power of the royal houses. When, early in the occupation, the Japanese authorities asked him his opinion of the status of the rajas, he answered, "It would be better if the rights of the rajas were abolished altogether."[46] Hamka carried this fight into the public arena, raising it in speeches "everywhere" and even in his speech in June 1943 at the great assembly, where he chastised the sultans for allowing the Dutch to so easily divide and rule by setting themselves apart from the people.[47]

Yet Hamka's influence was never strong enough to convince the Japanese to act against the sultans, as he eventually had to acknowledge. Even in individual cases of abuse, brought to him by people seeking a well-placed go-between, he could rarely do anything. He came to understand, he says, that the governor was not interested in "helping the movement fight the rajas."[48] The Japanese had correctly assessed "the movement" as the weaker protagonist. They were more than willing to placate and flatter and cajole the "movement Muslims," but they weren't willing to offend the more powerful sultans.[49] Nor were they really interested in the opinions of the senior Native advisers in the Shu Sangi Kai, aside from matters having to do with the execution of the war: "How can we increase agricultural production? . . . How can we forge the spirit of the people so that they willingly assist the imperial Japanese Army?"[50] In

other words, the council was made to appear responsible for "extracting the power of the people, exhausting what was left of their blood, . . . and seizing the remaining supplies of rice."[51] All for Japan! For agreeing to do this, he says, the members were happy to receive "sitting money and travel money."[52] Naturally, the ordinary people—the hungry people—began to hate them. And all the more so Hamka himself, who "talked so much!"[53]

Hamka's gnawing sense of alarm about his close ties to the Japanese was heightened in early 1944, when he spent three months in Java. Here the senior nationalist leaders under Sukarno (including Mohammad Hatta, Kyai Haji Mas Mansur, and Ki Hadjar Dewantara) were involved in a more elaborate structure of collaboration called Putera, or Center of People's Power.[54] Despite this collaboration, disillusionment with Japan remained pervasive. Everywhere he went, Hamka says, he saw hunger and dearth on a scale far surpassing that of Sumatra. "The Japanese were seizing all of the rudiments of life."[55]

In Jakarta, Hamka lodged with his exiled father, Haji Rasul, who expressed his hatred for the Japanese and his private scorn for collaborators, although he, too, agreed to advise the Japanese from time to time.[56] Ailing and approaching his final days, Rasul was still a lion. In 1943, when the Japanese had gathered the *ulama*s of all Java in Bandung to express their solidarity with the New Order in Asia, Rasul alone had refused to rise from his seat during the grand ceremony and bow (*keirei*) toward Japan. Hamka describes this proud moment of defiance in *My Father*, but it surely vexed him, too, since he and the other Sumatra *ulama*s had acquiesced in the ceremony through a face-saving compromise. Although Haji Rasul's brave gesture enraged the Japanese, it also earned their respect and led ultimately to a decision not to require the *keirei*—another fact that Hamka reveals proudly but also, one feels, ruefully.[57]

Hamka consulted with several national leaders while in Java. He mentions Wahid Hasyim, Mas Mansur, and Mohammad Hatta.[58] Most conspicuously, however, Hamka writes of Sukarno. Sukarno had often sought the advice of Hamka's father, Haji Rasul, and the two had developed an affectionate bond, so much so that Rasul had adopted the fiery nationalist as his "son." Sukarno and Hamka were, therefore, "brothers."[59] Hamka talked frankly with Sukarno about collaboration, especially in light of obvious Japanese excesses and waning popular support for Sukarno himself, whose once-crowded rallies now drew fewer and fewer people. Sukarno remained steadfast in his strategy of cooperation with Japan, even though the people suffered horribly. "A leader must have a big soul," he told Hamka. "To change their destiny our people must first undergo great suffering. The weak will be destroyed, but history will act as a filter and spare the strong. They will remain and carry forward our dreams."[60]

Hamka pondered all of this as he departed again for Sumatra in April 1944. "Bung Karno" accompanied him to the station, where the two engaged in a teary farewell. Haji Rasul was now gravely ill.

"Our father, Bung," says Hamka.

"Don't worry, Brother," answers Sukarno.[61]

Back in Medan, Hamka reported to Governor Nakashima that in Java the Japanese administration had set up the Pusat Penasehat Agama (Central Religious Advisory Office) under Professor Hussein Djajadiningrat, a Western-educated Muslim luminary and intellectual, with regional branches headed by Indonesians. When the governor warmed to the idea, Hamka daydreamed about being appointed head of religion and having his own car and arriving at the sultan's palace empowered with his new authority.[62] But it was not to be. Governor Nakashima appointed a Japanese officer instead. Hamka was to remain a senior adviser. Hamka again found himself outflanked by the sultan's anti-Muhammadiyah clerics and by the war-obsessed Japanese. His enthusiasm for "the final victory" was definitely flagging, and he began to distance himself from the occupiers—all the more so in light of news seeping in about Japan's declining fortunes in the Pacific.[63]

Hamka's hopes were restored, however, in September 1944, when Japan's new prime minister, Koiso Kuniaki, issued a proclamation promising independence for Indonesia "in the near future."[64] He learned of this when two local reporters from the Japanese news agency Domei came to his house with the news. He describes how he immediately retreated into his room and prayed to God in thankfulness. Suddenly, he writes, the sacrifices and disappointments all seemed worth it. He threw himself into the propaganda war, speaking in rallies all over East Sumatra. On Idul Fitri, the great Muslim day of celebration following Ramadan, the Indonesian red and white national flag was unfurled at Medan's public plaza. As the nation-to-be's anthem, "Indonesia Raya," sounded in the background, Japanese cameras captured Hamka with tears flowing down his face.[65]

Hamka's role as a prominent collaborator with the Japanese heightened toward the war's end. He recalls in his memoirs soliciting from Sukarno a telegram inviting him to join the national efforts in Java, which he used blatantly to enhance his status in East Sumatra and which led to his appointment as member (*giin*) in the new Sumatra-wide advisory council, the Sumatra Chuo Sangi In. He was frankly thrilled about the senior appointment and gave up any thought of shifting to Java, where his father lay dying. "I was defeated by the name *giin*," he writes. Hamka predictably tried to use his new authority to advance the interests of Muhammadiyah in East Sumatra, especially in the

sequestered domains of the sultans and their conservative religious officials. Once again, however, he realized that his Japanese-given powers amounted to little more than a "blunt knife."[66]

By the summer of 1945, Japan's allies in Europe had collapsed, and its own empire in Asia was contracting; the Philippines had fallen to American forces during campaigns of the winter and spring. Acting to shore up its collaborating elites in the occupied Indies, Japan now gave more prominence to its Native advisory councils. To that end, in July it mounted a Sumatra-wide gathering of the Chuo Sangi In in Bukittinggi. Hamka, who ordinarily moved about on a bicycle, recalled being driven there with the other delegates from East Sumatra in a convoy of "good cars" with a Japanese escort. The members of the Chuo Sangi In formed the core of Sumatra's nationalist leadership. The possibility of imminent power shifts was very much on their minds. Where will Sumatra fit in a postwar scenario, they wondered? An important aspect of the meeting was the behind-the-scenes caucuses, where most of the delegates confirmed among themselves their allegiance to a united Indonesia under the leadership of Sukarno and Hatta.[67]

Hamka took the opportunity of the Bukittinggi meeting to visit his home village nearby on the Maninjau lakeside, where a thousand people came to hear him speak. Here among his own people—"There's no one else here, is there?"—he took pains to explain his collaboration with Japan. It's all a game, he told them. "We're not really fighting for Japan! We're fighting for our own freedom, religious freedom and national freedom! We're thankful if Japan can help. . . . But if it should happen that Japan is defeated, are we going to stop fighting for our freedom? . . . Will we let the Allied Armies come to our country and take back our beloved land?" Thus prompted, the crowd yelled, "No, no!"[68]

Hamka returned to Medan as the war approached its end. On August 6, a committee headed by Sukarno and Hatta was announced to prepare for independence. According to his memoirs, Hamka was appointed to a similar all-Sumatra committee the next day. Soon, Sukarno and Hatta met in Saigon with Marshall Terauchi Hisaichi and announced upon their return on August 12 that "we shall receive our independence very quickly. Before the corn ripens."[69] After this the radio fell silent, and Hamka heard no more news, he says, until the morning of August 22, when a Japanese soldier told him that the war was over. "America has dropped bombs to annihilate Japan," the soldier told Hamka bitterly. "Sumatra will be taken by the English."[70]

Hamka was soon attending a hastily called meeting with Governor Nakashima. The *chokan* described the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and confirmed that the war was indeed over. (The emperor had announced

Japan's surrender on August 15.) He then solicited the help of the gathered leaders to keep the people calm in the uncertain days ahead. What about independence? Nakashima told him that he'd heard that "Sukarno has already proclaimed independence!"[71] In fact, he had done so on August 17, five days before.

Instead of rejoicing, Hamka fell into a panic. He had been a prominent, indeed an outspoken, collaborator with Japan. Now his protector, Governor Nakashima, was no longer *chokan* but the mere "Mr. Nakashima."[72] As the news reached the public, jubilant people who had suffered terribly under Japan turned an angry eye toward collaborators. Only a few weeks before, at a time when many people were hungry and starving, Hamka had thoughtlessly held a lavish ritual feast to celebrate his son's circumcision. Now, fearing reprisals, he hastily removed from his shirt the badge of gold identifying him as a member of the Shu Sangi Kai.[73] A Muhammadiyah member approached him and said, "All this time, you have been sucking up too much."[74] Angry people threw shit at his house.[75] In a private meeting with Nakashima, Hamka begged the general to help him get to Java and then completely broke down and had to be ushered away.[76]

The next day, Nakashima called for Hamka. He couldn't get him to Java. But he could provide him with one of his private cars (and a driver and gasoline) to go wherever he wished. "And here is a gift from me," he added, "as a way of saying thank you for your helpfulness to me all these days."[77] Nakashima's translator then handed him five pieces of fine Javanese *batik* and ten thousand guilders. Hamka describes how he accepted these gifts from Nakashima and, in a fit of panic and confusion and against the urgent pleading of his closest friends, determined to flee. He piled his large family in the *chokan*'s car and departed at dusk, just as the drum sounded announcing the break in the Ramadan fast. Two days later he arrived in Bukittinggi, safe in the Alam. Only four days had passed since he had learned of Japan's defeat.[78]

Hamka's flight from Medan cost him dearly. By the time he cleared his head and returned eighteen days later, feelings had hardened against him, even among his closest friends and associates. The issue wasn't collaboration but rather cowardice and betrayal of leadership.[79] Medan was now stirring with the new state of affairs, including Indonesia's claim to independence and an impending struggle with the Dutch. Hamka found himself shouldered aside everywhere. He was not invited to join the Indonesian Islamic Party (Partai Islam Indonesia, or Parsi) being activated by local "movement Muslims," for example, or to participate in Masjumi, the late-wartime amalgamation of Muslim mass organizations fostered by the Japanese now morphing into a political grouping.[80] He was no longer invited to speak or to give the sermon at Friday prayers.

Hamka at war's end. A 1945 portrait by Japanese artist Yamaguchi, given "as a remembrance." *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, vol. 3 (Jakarta: Gapura, 1951), 182. Courtesy of Irfan Hamka.

Worst of all, his peers ousted him as leader of the Medan branch of Muhammadiyah and replaced him with his close friend and former colleague at *Society's Compass*, M. Yunan Nasution. To this rebuke, Hamka petulantly clung to his title as consul on a technicality. But his former comrades steadfastly held him to the sidelines, all the while remaining friendly on a strictly personal level. He was in great pain.

Hamka endured suffering for three months and assuaged some of the pain by beginning to write again. He also needed money. By the end of November he was finishing his second book. In his memoirs, Hamka describes writing the book's final passage, which includes an image of the Indonesian flag: "There, in the garden of my house," it begins, "the Red and White is already waving."[81] Writing about his country's freedom, he is soon in tears. Quietly, his wife, Siti Raham, enters the room, carrying on her hip the couple's eight-month-old child. She comes to his side and gently scratches his balding head. It feels wonderful, he says. They cry together and talk, and finally she says, "Let's go home."[82]

Hamka remained in Medan just long enough to attend a regional Muhammadiyah conference in early December 1945. On the first morning of the conference, the delegates officially voted him out of this position as consul for East Sumatra. Before the conference ended two days later, he had packed his belongings and left Medan for good.[83]

Bung Haji and a Muslim Nation

As the Indonesian revolution lurched into motion, Hamka withdrew for a time to regain his footing and to take stock. Back in the formative places of his youth—at the Maninjau lakeside and in and about the highland towns of West Sumatra—Hamka witnessed the cruel consequences of the recently ended war. Hungry people had emptied the rice barns and in places even eaten the seed rice. Small children begged at coffee stalls. In towns like Bukittinggi, young women ruined during the war powdered their faces at night and walked the streets. Everywhere the schools were closed or foundering.[84] In this dispiriting atmosphere, Hamka began writing again in earnest. In a flurry of short books that appeared in 1946, he attempted to capture his country's revolutionary moment and to place it within the Great Story of Islam in Indonesia.[85]

The titles of Hamka's new books make clear what was on his mind. The key words are revolution (*repoloesi* or *revolusi*), freedom (*merdeka*), and Islam. *Negara Islam* (Muslim nation) contains the thrust of his argument. He begins

by reminding his readers that the Prophet Muhammad himself had created the world's first Muslim state. As Muslims, in other words, we Indonesians have the Prophet's own example to guide us. But as Muslims, he added—warming to his favorite theme—we also have agency. God has given us intellect and commanded us to use it. We can use this agency now, he said, in this revolutionary moment, to repair the bad things in our society and to build the nation we have dreamed of: a modern nation imbued with the values of Islam, a truly Muslim Indonesia.

How shall we go about building such a nation? For this goal, Hamka wrote, Islamic political history doesn't have the answers. Indeed, for century upon century, in the vast Muslim empires of the past, Muslims lived under despotic caliphs who achieved vast powers but who, in complicity with sycophantic clerics, suppressed free thought and led their subjects into the darkness of intellectual stagnation.[86] Meanwhile, human intellect unfettered by religion led Western societies to new social philosophies and new freedoms and eventually to democracy. Today, all civilized societies are learning from the West. Our own constitution of the Republic of Indonesia embraces Western ideas. As modern Muslims, we should too.

But our democracy also has Muslim roots, he said. Centuries ago, the Prophet Muhammad showed us the way. He and his immediate followers actually practiced a form of democracy in which important decisions were made by consensus (*shura*). Moreover, all of the modern values of democracy are embedded or foreshadowed in the Qur'an and Hadith. These values include the equality of all humans before God, freedom from tyranny, freedom of thought and speech, and social justice. Moreover, the Prophet Muhammad himself did not create or prescribe any permanent form of government, including the caliphate.[87] Rather, the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet's own example "free Muslims to choose a form of government that comports with their own times."[88] The caliphate, he reminded his readers, was now a thing of the past. Kemal Ataturk had abolished it in Turkey, and "among modern authorities on government, no one any longer wants to turn back the clock and encourage Muslims to bring it back."[89]

Independent Indonesia became the world's third modern Islamic state (following Turkey and Syria), and it is a republic, Hamka wrote. And although the Prophet never referred to a republic, he set the example by consulting sincerely among his friends and advisers and wives. His farewell sermon was "imbued with the fundamental ideas of democracy."[90] Following the Prophet's death, his immediate successors as head of the state, the first caliphs Abu Bakar and Umar, were chosen by election, foreshadowing modern leaders, including

our own Sukarno.[91] Here, in a few short lines, Hamka had linked the Republic of Indonesia and its president to the foundational moments of Islam, a recurring tactic in his Great Story.

What is more, Hamka told his readers, with its insistence on charity (*zakat*) and brotherhood and its teaching that all worldly property is, in fact, God's property and provided as a blessing to humanity, Islam prefigured modern socialism and Communism. But whereas modern Western Communism, with its emphasis on class conflict, has "slipped off the rails of humanity," "Muslim Communism" was true Communism, infused with faith and based upon brotherly love and the equality of all people before God.[92] Indeed, the Prophet and his allies attempted to establish the first Islamic states upon these very ideas.[93]

In other words, as builders of our own new state, we Indonesian Muslims have a lot of our own to build upon, even as we draw upon the important lessons of the West. To be sure, the new Indonesian republic should not be a theocracy. "Matters of the state," he wrote, "must be separated from matters of religion."[94] Where the law is concerned, only matters involving family life—such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, and the like—should go before *shari'a* courts, since in this area Muslim law is superior. Everything else—from the adjudication of property and business disputes to cases involving disturbance of the peace, theft, and high crimes—should be heard before the secular courts of the Indonesian Department of Justice. Matters such as war and peace and international treaties and agreements should be settled by statesmen, not clerics.[95] Our religious authorities, especially the experts in Muslim law (*ulama fiqh*), are not equipped to meddle in such matters, he said. They do not understand democratic government.[96] But our national leaders such as Sukarno, Mohammad Hatta, and Sutan Sjahrir, and including conspicuously Muslim leaders such as Haji Agus Salim and Mohammad Natsir, do understand democracy and are steeped in Western political philosophy.[97] We are wise to follow them.

In discussing the character of Indonesia's nation-in-the-making, Hamka emphasized religious tolerance. The Prophet taught that doing harm to non-Muslims (particularly to Christians and Jews as members of the same prophetic tradition) was the same as harming him. The first caliphs had also been adamant about this subject; Umar in particular, to whom Hamka attributes the following admonition, expressed to his deputy Amir bin Ash in the newly conquered Egypt after Amir's son struck a Copt Christian youth: "Why have you enslaved people, oh Amir, when they were born to their mothers in freedom?"[98] With this line, Hamka wrote, Umar laid down the very "basis for democracy"—yet more evidence that democracy is rooted "in the teachings of our religion."[99]

Later caliphs such as Suleiman al-Qanuni (1520–1566), who plundered Vienna, and Mehmed el-Fatih (1432–1481), who converted the Sophia church into a mosque at Constantinople, violated Islam's teachings of tolerance and became notorious for their tyrannies. (Here Hamka explained the rule established by Umar for the early Muslim empire, in which converts to Islam were treated as absolute equals, and followers of other religions who acknowledged Muslim rule were accorded respect and security and made subject to a poll tax [*jizyah*] in return for protection.)[100] Modern notions of universal rights that apply across all religions, reaching us from the West, comport with Islam's early teachings, he wrote. Today, all civilized nations embrace these rights.[101]

In making this point, Hamka endorsed Indonesia's new constitution of 1945, in which the country's founders described an explicitly secular state: "We don't want to alter the contents of the Constitution to say, 'Islam is the National Religion.'"[102] No, Hamka explained, this would disappoint his fellow citizens who are not Muslim. It is something the Prophet himself would not approve.[103] Hamka did not raise the issue of the Jakarta Charter, which, had it not been rejected in 1945 as part of the constitution by Sukarno and other senior leaders, would have required Indonesian Muslims to live under the authority of the *shari'a*.[104] Rather, in his pamphlet *Islam dan Demokrasi* (Islam and democracy), also of 1946, he takes pains to praise the clause that Indonesia's constitution writers *did* adopt as the first of five national principles (Panca Sila): belief in one Almighty God.[105] This is the authentic foundation of our nation. Although God has many names, there is truly only one God. And it is this God who gave "this beautiful land" to our ancestors, long before they were Buddhists or Hindus or Muslims or Christians.[106] So now, in this important moment, we shouldn't be divided from our fellow Indonesians. Rather, he wrote, let us "worship the One God according to our own convictions and religions and ask in our prayers that he will always protect the land he has given us."[107]

None of these elements (the secular state, universal rights, ecumenism), however, meant that Indonesia could not become a "Muslim nation." That Indonesia was a Muslim nation would be manifest "in the lives of our people."[108] In short, the sort of Muslim nation that Hamka aspired to in Indonesia was a Muslim *society*.

The sort of society Hamka had in mind would be liberated in more ways than one. In *Adat Minangkabau Menghadapi Repoloesi* (Minangkabau customs confront the revolution) of early 1946, he seized the moment of Indonesia's independence to reframe an old argument, one he had often raised in his novels. We are a free people now, he said, free to speak and write openly. We should use this freedom as Islam encourages us to do: to reexamine critically our old

ways of doing things, including our hallowed customary law, or *adat*. "In this book," he wrote, "I am going to open up several new issues, especially concerning Minangkabau society."[109] He warned his readers that they might not like what he was about to say, but he asked them to consider it with their judgment and not their feelings. Think of our old proverb, he said: "If it's sweet, don't gulp it down. If it's bitter, don't spit it out. First, hold it in your mouth for a while."[110]

Hamka then launched into a frontal assault on the core values and customs of Minangkabau society, a society dominated by women and their matrilineal clans in which men were rendered marginal, especially as husbands and fathers. As his readers knew, the elaborate rules of Minangkabau society were encoded in hundreds of proverbs, sayings, and poems that were recited endlessly during clan deliberations and in village chatter. Collectively known as *adat*, these rules were seen as eternal. *Adat*, as the saying has it, "neither rots in the rain nor cracks in the heat."[111] In a long passage tracing the roots of Minangkabau society, Hamka described the tenacity of its matrilineal customs in the face of Islam's growing influence. In a society where the mosques are full and people eagerly seek religious instruction, he noted, few preachers dare to criticize the "ancient social structure that [has existed] since the rise of Mount Merapi."[112] Even Haji Rasul, Hamka's uncompromising father, had made his peace with that structure.[113]

"I'm not disparaging the *adat*," he wrote, "only mourning it." It has served us well in the past, for hundreds of years protecting us against foreign influence. And it is truly a thing of beauty. But its time is past; "Only God is eternal." New times call for new arrangements. "I pity the camel," he said. "But we need cars!"[114]

At the heart of Hamka's critique of Minangkabau *adat* was its baleful influence on family structure. All over the world, he said, the household is the basis of society. But in Minangkabau, "there are no households. This is because men have no authority whatsoever."[115] In the Minangkabau heartland, rice fields, gardens, and homes pass from mothers to daughters; women dominate the group's large family residences (*rumah gadang*), while boys and youths sleep apart in a dormitory (*surau*) until they are invited to marry into a matrilineal clan and sleep with their wives in the big house; once a man is married, much of his earnings are channeled to enlarge the properties of his wife and her family; when children arrive, nurturing them is the responsibility not of the father but of the mother's brother, or *mamak*; divorce is easy and commonplace; and because husbands have so few responsibilities toward their wives and children, polygamy is rampant. (Islam, of course, sanctioned polygamy [up to four wives] but Hamka said that the polygamy of Minangkabau was "*adat* polygamy," not Muslim

polygamy.)[116] And although the society's *adat* chiefs are male, they achieve their titles through their mothers and use them to meddle endlessly in the private affairs of clan members.

This order of things causes endless distress and disharmony in families—all the more so when men have several wives competing for their resources—and erodes the primal bond between fathers and their children. The children themselves, he went on, live in a confusion of mothers and fathers, stepmothers and stepfathers, and aunts and uncles, not always knowing who is who. Hamka knew all of this from his own bitter experience. But here he simply offered an anecdote about a child who mistakes his father for his *mamak* and then states, "There are certainly plenty of children who don't really know what their fathers look like."[117] A healthy national society cannot be constructed with building blocks like these.

Things were better in the diaspora, he wrote. When Minangkabau men and families migrated to towns and cities outside the heartland—in what they called the *rantau*—they could escape the pressures of Minangkabau custom and create proper nuclear families.[118] Men could accumulate wealth of their own, that is, if they could resist the pressures to take extra wives and to squander their gains showing off for their wife's relatives in annual visits "home" (the downfall of Leman in Hamka's *Migrating to Deli*). Living independently in the diaspora taught Minangkabau men important lessons, he added, including the value of monogamy. Taking a second wife meant forfeiting one's chance for prosperity and led inevitably to unfairness in providing for one's wives and children. A monogamous life, Hamka wrote, is a peaceful one in which a couple can practice mutual understanding and forgiveness and avoid the jealousies that arise when a second or third wife competes with the first.[119]

Over time, Hamka wrote, migrants in the diaspora "loosen themselves from *adat*, because the *adat* doesn't fit the changing times."[120] A husband realizes that he doesn't have to return to the village every year. He works harder to provide for his family. If he builds a house in Medan or Surabaya or Jakarta, it is his own. When he dies, his house and other properties will pass to his children. And these children will care for their mother when she is alone, so that she won't be forced by her matrilineal clan to remarry.[121] For her part, the wife becomes aware that the person she most depends upon "isn't her mother's brother but her husband, the father of her children."[122] Life in the diaspora also liberated Minangkabau men and women to marry outside the ethnic group and to enter the emerging multiethnic society of Indonesia. As we have seen, these were recurrent themes in Hamka's storyscape of the 1930s.

Hamka pointed out that Indonesia already recognized several Minangkabau leaders. He named Haji Agus Salim, Abdul Rivai, Mohammad Hatta, Sutan Sjahrir, and the Communist Tan Malaka. Can their success be attributed to Minangkabau's hallowed *adat*? Hardly. All of them achieved their success only "after freeing themselves from the ties of the homeland."[123] This is what we all must do. To be in step with the times, he wrote, "fathers must raise their children; polygamy must be wiped out; the [nuclear] family must stand firm; the '*adat* house' [*rumah gadang*] must pass away; and the *adat* chiefs must carry on with their titles alone, but without their power."[124] As for the vaunted *adat* itself, he wrote, "it belongs in a museum."[125]

Bung Haji

By the time Hamka wrote these words, the Indonesian revolution was well under way. Hostilities had broken out quickly in the wake of Japan's defeat, as freedom fighters in Java attempted to frustrate the reestablishment of Dutch government. In East Sumatra, where Hamka had spent his happy Medan years, leftist revolutionaries attacked the region's residual sultans and rajas and their families and retinues in March 1946, murdering hundreds in the so-called social revolution.[126] As collaborating royalties under the Dutch, these minipotentates had lived well and helped to legitimate the colonial state in the eyes of their subjects. Hamka called their overthrow saddening; he knew many of these figures personally and had clashed with them on occasion. It just goes to show, he wrote, that in these revolutionary times the power of the old elites can't be defended anymore, all the more so because some of them owed their elevated status and even their very titles to the Dutch.[127]

Meanwhile, West Sumatra also stirred with revolutionary activity. As elsewhere in beleaguered Indonesia, groups of impassioned youths, the *pemuda*, affiliated with one political party or faction or another, formed ad hoc militias that were, in turn, linked in spirit to the official but not-yet-altogether-coherent army of the Republic of Indonesia. Hamka ended his book on Minangkabau *adat* with a plea to the young would-be fighters to stand together, calling them "the army of God."[128] "All of you are born in Islam," he wrote. "And all of you are sons of the Republic of Indonesia. The freedom we are now defending is just. . . . It does no harm to anyone. This is Sabilillah, the way of God."[129]

Hamka threw himself into the struggle, too. (In the memoirs he now becomes Bung Haji, or Brother Haji, conjuring an association with the famous revolutionary-era nicknames of Sukarno, or Bung Karno, and Mohammad

Hatta, Bung Hatta.) Having learned a hard lesson about politics in Medan, he vowed to confine his revolutionary efforts to "my tongue and my pen."[130] But he was soon drawn into action. In Minangkabau, Hamka was a member of Muhammadiyah's founding family. Despite his recent fall in Medan, in May 1946 he assumed regional leadership of the organization in West Sumatra and held it until December 1949.[131] At some point, he also joined the regional leadership council of Masjumi, the emerging Muslim political party that represented both Muhammadiyah and its Java-based traditionalist rival, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), and that held several key posts in the revolutionary cabinet.[132] This led to a more or less constant round of travel as he moved from one Muhammadiyah branch in Alam Minangkabau to another, at once shoring up the organization, stirring support for the Republic with fiery speeches, giving religious advice, and selling the books that he carried with him in a basket.[133]

In July 1947, in the wake of the first full-bore military Dutch assault on the Republican-held territories—the so-called first police action—West Sumatran revolutionary leaders formed a committee called the National Defense Front to facilitate dialogue among the leaders of some fifty-six revolutionary organizations.[134] Hamka agreed to chair the front, the highest post he was to occupy during the revolution. He began meeting regularly with the group's members and every Wednesday night with Vice President Mohammad Hatta himself, who governed Republican Sumatra from Bukittinggi from July 29, 1947, to January 1948.[135]

Cooperation proved elusive, however, and all the more so in January 1948, when the Republican government signed a controversial ceasefire agreement with the Dutch. The Renville Agreement was so disadvantageous to the Republic that Masjumi's cabinet members resigned along with those of President Sukarno's Indonesian Nationalist Party, or PNI.[136] Hamka vented his frustration in a scathing pamphlet titled *Sesudah Naskah Renville* (After the Renville document) that condemned the revolutionary government for corruption and mistakes, alongside the police, the political parties, and the "weak, listless populace." The police confiscated as many copies as they could, which, Hamka notes happily, improved his sales and let him recover his printing costs.[137]

Politics within the Republic polarized in the wake of the Renville crisis. Masjumi and Muhammadiyah found themselves on the right wing of a power struggle with left-wing Communists and Socialists. Factional quarrels undermined Hamka's National Defense Front, and it was subsumed under another body, effectively ceasing to exist.[138] Increasingly ill at ease as the crisis deepened, Hamka gradually withdrew and in September 1948 resigned from all his political

responsibilities, including the Dewan Pimpinan Masjumi Sumatera Tengah (central Sumatra Masjumi leadership council).[139]

Even so, he remained active in the cause until the end: touring the countryside in the wake of the Communist-led Madiun revolt of September 18, 1948, to explain the Republican government's decision to crush it; stirring crowds with patriotic speeches; and traversing the Dutch-infested Alam to rouse and inform the people, following a harrowing escape from Bukittinggi during the second police action of December 1948.[140]

In his memoirs, Hamka elaborates upon these revolutionary years with graphic accounts of violence, confusion, and mistrust. Despite writing from hindsight, he manages to suggest the contingency of the outcome. He depicts himself as a peacemaker among competing revolutionary factions who were as wary of each other as they were of the Dutch.[141] In 1947 a dramatic incident forced him to analyze the wartime disarray. The Masjumi-affiliated Hizbullah, established by his brother-in-law Sutan Mansur, was one among many disparate revolutionary militias in West Sumatra. When some of its members, along with members of another Muslim youth militia called Sabilillah, rebelled against the local Republican government in March of that year, Hamka was called upon to defend them against the charge of mutiny.[142]

In his formal address to the court, Hamka began by noting that the Indonesian revolution had not been planned. Rather, the people's fury against the tyrannies of the Japanese army and the poverty of the occupation years had spilled out suddenly, spontaneously, at the war's end—at the very moment of independence. Indonesia was so large and so far-flung that these revolutionary outbursts could not be controlled by the Republican leadership at the center. Regions went their own way. In East Sumatra, a vicious social revolution occurred, wholly unsanctioned by the Republic. In West Sumatra, competing revolutionary "strike forces" based on *adat* or on Muslim or ideological affiliations surfaced, armed themselves, and pursued their own agendas. The Communists insisted on Communism; and some Muslim groups wanted to stone adulterers and sever the hands of thieves. ("In this day and age!" he exclaims in disapproval.) In addition, he argued, our young soldiers had only the arrogant Dutch and cruel Japanese as role models. We didn't have time to instruct them properly before sending them off to kill. And, let's face it, there are plenty of opportunists among us. On top of these circumstances, the people are hungry, spies and provocateurs are everywhere, and even in the best of times some people will do stupid things—such as the Muslim militias who claimed that only *their* deaths in the revolutionary struggle would be sacred and rewarded in heaven.[143]

In light of all this, he argued, it's not so surprising that well-meaning people, genuine patriots, sometimes lose their heads. We are all groping through this together, he said. "I ask that all the prisoners be freed."[144] The tribunal gave them light sentences, and Hamka was regaled in the press as the Émile Zola of Indonesia—as he hastens to tell his readers.[145]

When the Dutch occupied Bukittinggi in December 1948, Hamka fled along with the Republican leaders. He recounts in his memoirs how he met up with his family in Padang Panjang and arranged for them to go to a hillside village outside of town. A day later, following a narrow escape from a Dutch patrol and a nighttime trek through the countryside alone, he joined them there, where he hid himself under a thick blanket. When the landlord insinuated that his presence in the hamlet was a danger to everyone, he considered fleeing to Singapore or even to Egypt. Dutch flags now flew everywhere. "Our struggle has failed, evidently," he told his wife. But Hamka quickly rallied and soon departed to rendezvous with other partisans, leaving Siti Raham and his seven children behind in the hamlet.[146]

Hamka describes vividly the months he now spent behind the lines: palavering with revolutionary leaders at secret hideouts, trudging up and down for hundreds of kilometers through the jungly hinterlands, dodging Dutch patrols and narrowly escaping, arriving late at remote villages to cries of "*buya*, our *buya* [leader]," sharing simple country meals made exquisite by hunger and exhaustion, and everywhere praying with the people and rousing them to hold fast and to hope.[147] In these dark days of the revolution—for the Dutch had also captured Yogyakarta and the top Republican leaders—factional animosities faded and the cause of Free Indonesia seemed pure. Faced with danger, Hamka found the capacity to be brave. It was a classic wartime epiphany.[148]

Hamka often called upon the image of a boat in troubled waters. Toward the end of this period, he found himself in just such a boat with his son and four others. Here is his version of their story: Their small party pushes out onto the smooth waters of Lake Maninjau. Suddenly, two Dutch warplanes appear overhead. They fly past, circle, and burst through the clouds, coming straight at the boat. "Say the *shahadat*, *'lā 'ilāha 'illā-llāh* [There is no god but God]!" Hamka cries urgently. "Maybe we will be martyred."[149] The planes make two low passes over the little boat and disappear into the sky, and Hamka and the others are soon safe on the other side.

As the fighting wound down and the revolution entered into a final round of negotiations, Hamka rested in his home village along the lake of his youth and plunged back into writing. Working urgently, he completed a short novel of the revolution that depicts a man who sided with the Dutch, a man now in

disgrace. Hamka's own disgrace in Medan had occurred only three years before. It was clearly much on his mind. At the novel's end, the narrator advises the accused traitor to believe in himself: "That is the source of your comeback."[150] Hamka had also been collecting material for his biography of Haji Rasul, who had died in 1945. Very likely, he devoted considerable time to this big project and others that he had neglected during the war.[151] In May 1949 a Republican spy returned from Dutch-occupied Bukittinggi with a letter informing him that several money orders had arrived from his publishers in Medan, being the proceeds from reprints of his earlier books. It was a "flood of money," Hamka writes, and, after stealthily acquiring it, he returned to Lake Maninjau and heaped it before his long-suffering wife, Siti Raham, who had been selling off family possessions to feed their seven children in wartime.[152]

Dutch–Indonesian negotiations dragged on until December 1949. Hamka was in Bukittinggi the day the Dutch at last relinquished the town. By the time sovereignty passed officially to the new Republic of the United States of Indonesia at the end of the month, he had already abandoned Alam Minangkabau for Jakarta, Indonesia's new capital. Indeed, two days later, he tells us, he was not only in the capital but was celebrating independence in the company of Sukarno and other senior leaders in the Presidential Palace itself.[153] His memoirs end here. He is forty-one.

Hamka does not explore the reasons for his apparently impetuous move to Jakarta. Yet they seem obvious. Since the 1930s, Hamka had framed his aspirations not on Alam Minangkabau or Sumatra but on the nation as a whole, on Indonesia. Jakarta was now the center of the nation. Where else would he want to be? Hamka spent the rest of his unpredictable life there, striving for a Muslim nation in the unpredictable arena of free Indonesia. Despite the sober lessons of the revolution, Hamka remained hopeful about Indonesia and about the Great Story he was telling. A diverse society with many histories was uniting as one nation; it was overcoming the legacies of colonial rule and outmoded customs and embracing a modern hybridity of East and West; and, all the while, it was rooting itself ever more deeply in the teachings and values of Islam. Hamka did not take this destiny, or his own, for granted. Having placed himself within his country's history, he plunged in. His little boat had made it to the other side. Indonesia, his beloved Muslim nation, would, too.

4

Islam for Indonesia

From Indonesia's new capital, Hamka looked out across the cities and towns and villages of the nation and to the global *umma* Islam and the wider world beyond. But for the rest of his life, it was the nation that concerned him most.[1] In Jakarta, he carved out a unique role for himself among the new country's emerging national intelligentsia. Settling his already large and still-growing family in the capital city, he landed a post as a senior official at the ministry of religion as a member of the Hajj Leadership Council. In this capacity he performed his second pilgrimage in 1950.[2] Following further travels in Egypt and Iraq, he retreated to a busy life in Jakarta, writing frantically day by day and otherwise throwing himself into the new project of Indonesia. By 1951 he was teaching at the Akademi Wartawan (Journalism Academy) and at the new Muslim teachers' college and soon became a "flying professor," dropping in to teach classes in several of the new country's burgeoning academies.[3]

Emzita, who assisted him during this period, describes how Hamka began writing just after the dawn *subuh* prayers, typing his work directly and having Emzita read it back to him aloud before sending it off to this or that newspaper—all before breakfast.[4] Then Hamka made the rounds of the Ministry of Religion, Vice President Hatta's office, and the headquarters of Masjumi and Muhammadiyah, where his brother-in-law Sutan Mansur was national chair between 1953 and 1959 and where Hamka himself was a member of the governing board.[5] Fridays he was in demand for the weekly sermon, or *khutbah*.[6]

Hamka's flurry of new work included *My Father*, his memoirs, and much else besides. Indeed, between 1950 and 1952 Hamka flooded the bookstores with his books, just in time for the massive expansion of public and religious education that occurred during the decade and for legions of newly literate readers.[7] Among these books were compilations of old *Society's Compass* columns such as *1001 Soal Hidup* (A thousand and one problems of life); reprinted articles

Hamka at work, Jakarta, 1951. Pusat Dokumentasi Sastra H. B. Jassin.

from 1946 to 1950, published as *Tjahaja Baru* (New light); and Hamka's end-of-the-revolution novel, *Menunggu Beduk Berbunyi* (Waiting for the drum).[8] In 1950 he brought out a short self-help book called *Peribadi* (Personality).[9] He also penned sweeping studies of Islam and sociopolitical issues such as *Keadilan Sosial dalam Islam* (Social justice in Islam) and *Falsafah Ideologi Islam* (Islamic philosophy and ideology) in which he drew on new writing from Egypt and again took up the themes of his early revolutionary writings.[10] In 1952 he returned to the subject of Sufism in *Perkembangan Tasauf dari Abad ke Abad* (The development of Sufism from century to century).[11] And during the same frenetic years he launched his series on the history of the Muslim people, which eventually achieved four volumes.[12] In all of these books, Hamka expanded and embellished the already familiar themes of his Great Story, placing himself and his readers within the vast river of human experience that flowed through Indonesia.

Building the Great Story

Hamka took up many of these themes in August 1950 at the national Konperensi Lembaga Kebudajaan Indonesia (Conference on Indonesian Cultural Institutions). This conference brought together delegates representing the full spectrum of Indonesia's intelligentsia to address the question: Who, exactly, is the new Indonesian?[13] At the conference, Hamka emphasized some of the core themes of his Great Story and subsequently expanded his remarks into his book *Islamic Philosophy and Ideology*.

We are a free people now, he said. Our young society, like others at war's end, is "not yet in order." This is true in every field: in politics and government, in the economy, and in our social life. The corruption is shameful.[14] In facing this crisis, our leaders naturally look to examples from the outside, from the advanced democracies of the West or from the Communist example of Russia. And, indeed, we have much to learn from liberalism, secularism, and Communism. But Indonesians today, he said, are too much taken in by foreign "isms." Islam itself provides the best framework for national coherence and unity.[15] It is deeply rooted among us and served us well during the long centuries of colonial domination. Indeed, Islam inspired justifiable rebellions against foreign rule—he mentions Diponegoro of Java and Tuanku Iman Bondjol of Minangkabau—and provided the impetus for modern nationalism under leaders such as Cokroaminoto. These leaders include our own President Sukarno.[16] During the revolution, he asked, what was the source of our power to resist? It was the *surau* and *pesantren*, our Muslim boarding schools.[17] This fact was evident even to some Indonesian Communists such as Tan Malaka.[18] Now

that the revolution is over, he said, we can draw upon Islam to build our new society.

The Prophet Muhammad's achievements included the creation of the first Muslim state, bringing order and unity to the quarreling tribes of Arabia. Although centuries have passed—centuries in which Muslim civilization flourished, expanded across much of the world, and sank into decline—Islam today offers solutions to our own problems of disillusion and disarray. Not only does Islam provide a value system to underpin a just, humane, and orderly society, but it also offers the means to reconcile and, where applicable, to embrace the "isms" and material gifts of the modern West while at the same time alerting us to the dangers. Of course, the sort of Islam Hamka had in mind was that formulated in the religion's late nineteenth-century renaissance by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh and other modernists, an Islam that embraced human agency and in which the door of *ijtihad* was wide open.[19] Because of this, Indonesian Muslims are capable of discerning the value of Western science and industry and other fruits of the Enlightenment without embracing secularism and the absolute separation of church and state.[20] And they can recognize the genius of Karl Marx and his ideas without embracing Communism, which propagates class war and believes that religion is the "opium of the masses."[21]

Communism was much on his mind. The Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI, Communist Party of Indonesia) had been sidelined during the revolution following the crisis and showdown at Madiun. Musso, the party's Moscow-oriented hardline leader, had been executed. In the early 1950s, the party remained marginalized and subject to state repression.[22] But it was not the party that concerned Hamka in 1950. It was the appeal of Communist ideas. After all, Hamka's own critique of Indonesian society emphasized many of the same things that the Communists did. Long passages in *Islamic Philosophy and Ideology* are devoted to the injustices of colonialism and capitalism, of feudal social hierarchies and inequalities of all kinds. Hamka dwelt on the corrosive impact of his country's poverty and summoned images of famine and dearth he encountered during the revolution. In those days—not so long ago!—poor people were obsessed with just one thing, "a bowl of rice."[23] He excoriated the greed of Indonesia's new leaders who engaged in "open and secret corruption."[24] He called to mind Indonesia's residual sultans and rajas who had lived lavishly under the Dutch off of lands leased to foreign capitalists—lands from which their poor subjects were forbidden to collect firewood—while sycophantic Muslim clerics lulled the people into passivity with fatalism and dreams of heaven.[25]

Capitalism caused much unhappiness in the world and destroyed "human morality."[26] Here Hamka related a favorite story of his from the Qur'an about a certain Qarun, a man of stupendous wealth from the time of Musa (Moses) who, because of his arrogance and greed, God caused to be swallowed up by the earth.[27] You might think, he wrote, that Marxists had been the first to address the fundamental issues of injustice in human society. But as the story of Qarun illustrates, Islam provided a powerful critique of greed and egregious materialism from the beginning. And, moreover, Islam developed institutions conspicuously dedicated to alleviating poverty and relieving suffering. These included *zakat*, or alms that are required of all Muslims as one of the five Pillars of Faith, and also a number of other obligatory or honored acts of generosity, including gifts, donations, grants, bequests, philanthropies, and rewards.[28] Communists cannot stigmatize Islam in the name of defending the rights of the poor. The poor are already defended.[29] Moreover, he wrote, Islam's rejection of caste and racial hierarchy and its teachings on human equality provided the basis for rejecting the feudal hierarchies of the past and for replacing them with fairer and more democratic social structures.[30] This can occur without class struggle because, unlike Communism, which is based solely on a material understanding of human society, in Islam material concerns are constrained by ethical and spiritual values that support social justice.[31] If we Muslims are true to these values, we can build a just society.

Hamka was all too aware, of course, that Muslim states of the past had often fallen short of such goals; indeed, some had been exemplary of the worst forms of tyranny and exploitation. Islam had tolerated slavery for centuries, just as Christian societies had.[32] Even Indonesia's former sultans and rajas who ruled so capriciously had been Muslims. So how is it that, as Indonesia plunges into independence, Islam can be "society's compass"? The answer lies, he said, in Islam's ability to change with the times, to evolve as human societies evolve. By relying upon Islam's pure source, the Qur'an, along with trusted Hadith and the rigorous application of their intellects, Indonesian Muslims could create a genuinely modern and authentically Islamic society. In its pure form, this would be a society in which behavior and belief, religion and the state, would blend together as smoothly "as fat and water in milk."[33]

What is standing in our way? Typically, Hamka located the major impediments within the Muslim community itself. Many Indonesians were ignorant about the true teachings of Islam. Laziness and narrow-mindedness on the part of the *ulama*s and our tendency to follow authority blindly are holding us back. Too many of us, he said, calling upon a favorite image, are like Mr. Follow. Some cling uncritically to seven-hundred-year-old religious laws dating from

the glory days of Baghdad and Egypt and to the outdated teachings of revered *ulamas*. Others are drawn to American democracy, nineteenth-century liberalism, and Russian Communism. Instead of following others blindly, he wrote, we should have faith in "our own character as a people." To achieve our goals, as the Prophet has instructed us, we should "begin with ourselves."[34]

So, what about ourselves? Hamka devoted another of his books from 1950 to this subject: *Personality*. In this short self-help book, Hamka asks: In times like these, who are the people who rise above others and become the shapers of history? He names Sukarno, Hatta, Sutan Sjahrir, Musso, Mohammad Natsir, Mohammad Roem, and Sultan Hamengku Buwono. He adds Chairil Anwar, the revolutionary-era poet; Adinegoro, his fellow journalist from Medan days; and Dr. H. A. Karim Amrullah—his own father, Haji Rasul. What is it about these otherwise normal human beings that makes them stand out?[35] It's not their appearance or any particular skill, he says. It's their character. Their personality.[36]

Under the Dutch, Hamka reminds his readers, we Indonesians were known as "the most submissive people in the world," and we lived passively in a society in which junior white officials lorded it over our senior elders and leaders.[37] Only a few dared to resist. But war and revolution have changed all that, and we are now free to develop ourselves in paths of our own choosing. If we are to rise to the opportunities and responsibilities of our new freedom, what sorts of people should we strive to be?

First of all, he said, we must slough off what remains of our colonial mentality and stop thinking of ourselves as small and inferior to everything Dutch.[38] To build strong personalities, we need to learn to believe in ourselves and "become a man," as the English poet Rudyard Kipling put it in his famous poem "If," which Hamka translates approvingly in *Personality*. Doing so involves developing qualities of confidence, perseverance, sympathy, humility, self-control, quick-mindedness, and physical attractiveness—including a neat personal appearance and cleanliness: "God is clean and loves cleanliness," he writes, citing the Prophet.[39] One should also have clear goals in life and a strong work ethic.[40] More importantly, one should develop one's mind and the critical faculty of rational thought. And finally, one must have the courage to act and to be bold. This is the aspect of personality, he writes, that separates those of "small spirits" from "those of big spirits."[41] This is the attribute that all shapers of history share.

Hamka embellishes his analysis of personality much as he did his former study of happiness, *Modern Sufism*, some fifteen years before, in which he made many of the same points. He calls upon the authority of the ancients, of

Socrates and Diogenes, and cites passages and stories from the Qur'an and Hadith. He quotes al-Ghazali, Arab scholars and poets of the golden age, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, and Muhammad Abduh. He tells the story of the fourteenth-century Damascus *alim* Ibn Taymiya's incarceration by the Mamluks to illustrate what it takes to have the courage of one's convictions.[42] He refers to contemporary Muslim figures such as Muhammad Iqbal, Kemal Ataturk, and Muhammad Husayn Haykal and Ahmad Amin of Egypt.[43] He writes of Abraham Lincoln, Mohandas K. Gandhi, Louis Pasteur, and Helen Keller, of Schopenhauer, Voltaire, and Nietzsche.

Hamka makes clear that people of great spirits are not confined to any one field of endeavor. Some, like Sukarno and Hatta and Sjahrir, are political leaders. Others, like Chairil Anwar and Abdul Muis, are poets and writers. Haji Rasul and Haji Agus Salim were leaders in religion. Sudirman was a great soldier. And others still are people we have never heard of, people who lead lives of dignity and purpose in everyday occupations as farmers, teachers, and village leaders.[44] Of course, religious faith is central to developing a strong personality, a big spirit. But in *Personality*, Hamka is expressly ecumenical. In Indonesia, he says, "we urge everyone to seek God and pursue God's blessings according to their own religion."[45]

Reading *Personality* today, it is obvious that Hamka's knowledge of Western thought was shallow and often anecdotal. His sometimes peculiar spellings (Arstide Brind for Aristide Briand) suggest that he was working from Arabic sources, which also led to amusing conflations such as "Marx Twain."[46] Even so, books like *Personality* illustrated for Hamka's often-first-generation readers the deep well of knowledge available to those wishing to improve themselves through learning, as he himself had done. At the same time, of course, Hamka was placing Indonesia and his Indonesian readers within a *certain* well of knowledge that reaffirmed their connections to Islam, classical Western civilization, and the modern West.

Hamka ends his brief guide to personality with a searing account of the Japanese occupation and the revolution and of the "not-yet-in-order" state of affairs in Indonesia.[47] In the midst of all this, some people have lost their faith and succumbed to anger, depression, and demoralization, even to suicide. But others have developed bigger personalities and stronger spirits. This is a hopeful sign. "Now the war with the Dutch is over," he writes. "Our fate is in our own hands." It is time to develop our people and to "fill up" our independence. We already have the capital to do this. "It is our own spirit."[48]

Returning to the theme of national culture in 1951, Hamka lamented the popular tendency to confuse Indonesian culture with Javanese culture, with its

Hindu-Buddhist roots on display in Java's monumental architecture and its classical song, dance, and *wayang* shadow-puppet theater. Java's high culture, he wrote in the Sumatra-based daily *Haluan*, is only one element of Indonesian culture. Our true national culture is being created all around us every day as our regional cultures meet and mingle in the national society. Hamka had identified this very same process in the 1930s in East Sumatra, where a new hybrid society and language were forming. The same thing is happening today in Jakarta, he said, where migrants from every region jostle together dynamically and where Western influences are also strong. This process is just beginning, but it is the true source of the "Indonesian culture that we hope for."[49] An example is music. These days, he said approvingly, "musicians are finding inspiration for new Indonesian music by playing Indonesian rhythms on Western instruments."[50]

The same is occurring in language, he wrote, as Indonesian absorbs words from the regional vernaculars (along with Dutch and English words) into the national language. The Javanese word *pandu*, for example, has replaced the old Dutch term *padvinder* to mean "scout," as in Boy Scout or Girl Scout.[51] There is a perfectly good Malay and Minangkabau word meaning the same thing: *pengakap*. Why isn't this word joining the national language and not the Javanese one? For the same reason, he wrote, that Javanese history is required in our high schools and Malay and Sumatran history is not: Java exercises the domineering influence in our new national society.

The solution to this problem, he told his Sumatran readers, is to preserve and promote our own regional cultures. He now regrets, he said, that many vibrant elements of traditional Minangkabau music, dance, and theater were stigmatized and forbidden by the purifying Wahhabist Padris of the nineteenth century. These elements are now being revived and should be taught in the schools.[52] Also worthy of preservation are the old Minangkabau mosques that reflect "the spirit of our ancestors."[53] These days, these mosques are being replaced with newer ones based on designs from Persia, Spain, Mecca, and Egypt. Yet the older mosques symbolize something important about Islam and Indonesia: the peaceful amalgamation of monotheism with what he called "Adityawarman's legacy," alluding to the great Java-linked Hindu-Buddhist Sumatran king of the fourteenth century. Embracing this kind of hybridity and aggressively preserving our regional traditions are the keys to creating a national culture that both respects and reflects its many parts. As for us Minangkabau, we should remember that "the smartest shopkeeper sells the most goods."[54]

War's end and Hamka's timely shift to the capital opened fresh opportunities for travel. As a member of the Ministry of Religion's Hajj Leadership Council,

in 1950 Hamka performed the hajj for a second time and also visited Iraq and Egypt. These trips yielded extensive traveler's tales, entire books that Hamka wrote and published hurriedly upon returning home. In them, he stressed the affinities linking Iraq and Egypt to Indonesia.[55] "Iraq had been inserted in my soul since the time I was small," he wrote, "because I read history and stories and the tales of 'a thousand and one nights.'"[56] It was the site of Islam's golden age under the caliph Harun al-Rashid, and "Baghdad was renowned for its progress and was the center of Muslim trade from the world round."[57] This historic moment still shone in the Muslim consciousness everywhere.

Yet for Indonesians, and for Hamka especially, Egypt took pride of place. "Egypt, oh Egypt," he enthused in his account of his 1950 trip there.[58] For his generation of young Sumatrans, Egypt was the ultimate source of contemporary Muslim thought and learning. Even "Mecca itself" paled before Egypt, he said.[59] Haji Rasul and his fellow reformers were followers of Egypt's Muhammad Abduh and used Egyptian textbooks in their schools.[60] Hamka admitted that in his younger days he was far better acquainted with Egyptian writers than Indonesian ones and that his knowledge of Western writers came through the "mediation" of Egypt.[61] Indeed, it was inspiration from Egypt that led him to become a writer, to bring out a magazine, to write books, to study philosophy, and to explore seriously new interpretations of religion—all of this before he ever set foot in the country.[62] In contemporary Egyptian intellectuals such as Ahmad Amin, Hamka found analogues for his own life. Amin's "pen often guided my pen," he wrote, "because we both came from the *surau* and were both forced by our fathers when we were very little to get up for . . . the *subuh* prayers before sunrise. [We also share] the same broad perspective and are not disappointed with the developments of the new age so that people today no longer live as they did fifty years ago when religion . . . was blanketed in unquestioning servitude to old ideas."[63]

In introducing his readers to Egyptian Muslim intellectuals like Ahmad Amin, Abbas Mahmud al-Aqqad, Muhammad Husayn Haykal, and Taha Husayn—all of whom he met during his brief sojourn in Egypt—and in revealing the affinities of their lives and work to his own, Hamka was personalizing the *umma*, emphasizing the meaningful ties in the Muslim world between Indonesians and fellow Muslims elsewhere.[64] He also told his readers about Egypt's young radicals of the Muslim Brotherhood, the al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin, whose leader, Hasan al-Banna, had recently been assassinated in reprisal for the brotherhood's involvement in the killing of the country's prime minister. His account of the brotherhood is sympathetic, but he does not fault one side or the other in its violent standoff with the government.[65] Indonesians, he

wrote, have reason to be grateful to Egypt. Along with Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Pakistan, and India, Egypt had recognized Indonesian independence at a time when Indonesians themselves were still fighting for it, and it had denied landing rights to Dutch aircraft.[66] This kind of solidarity also reflected the global ties of the *umma*.

These ties grew not only from Islam itself but also from the common experience of colonialism. Everywhere he went in the Middle East he heard the same thing: "We Eastern people all suffer in the same way."[67] In both Egypt and Iraq, Hamka observed a troubling gap between a small sector of haves at the top of society and a multitude of have-nots at the bottom. In both countries, residual feudal elites, including wealthy Muslim clerics, dominated government and landownership.[68] "The pleasures of life are extremely limited," he wrote of Egypt.[69] And in both countries the masses of common people live "in the darkness of ignorance, poverty, and illness." This was especially true of women.[70] Polygamy is rampant in Iraq, even among the poor; illiteracy is appalling. Iraq may be independent, he reported, but "only a handful of people at the top can feel the sweetness of freedom. The common people are not free yet."[71] Meanwhile, in Egypt, power passes from the party of this pasha to the party of that pasha despite elections in which elite candidates speak "in the name of the people."[72]

Hamka then abruptly interjects, "I nearly forgot!"[73] Is Indonesia any different? Can a country where people call the president "Seri Paduka Jang Maha Mulia Daulat Tuanku" be very far from its feudal roots?[74] Isn't Indonesia also fraught with a new form of feudalism involving nascent classes of elite officials, religious scholars, and military officers?[75] Isn't the phrase "in the name of the people" equally empty here? And aren't our own masses "still suffering because of ignorance, hunger, and disease?"[76]

Although many Muslim societies are now independent, Hamka observed, they are by no means free of the West. It is not overt imperialism that threatens us these days but Western culture. In both Cairo and Jakarta, mosques and skyscrapers now exist side by side, and elites in both countries are becoming "international minded" and aping Western fashions such as lipstick, nail polish, and social dancing (*dansa-dansi*). "The sovereignty of the minaret is beginning to be crowded out by the sovereignty of rumba and jazz."[77] Already in Egypt both men and women in "High Life circles" wear Western clothing, and women smoke cigarettes.[78] Obscene films worse than those of Hollywood are ubiquitous.[79] Things haven't gone quite this far in Indonesia, but it is obvious that both Egypt and Indonesia face a similar dilemma: they are striving to create modern Muslim societies in a world where Western culture is clearly ascendant.

In 1952 Hamka had an opportunity to test his opinions about the West firsthand as an official visitor to the United States. If in his trips to the Middle East he had sought "the source of spiritual strength," he wrote in his two-volume account of the trip, in America he would "seek the source of intellectual strength."[80]

During his four-month tour of America, Hamka visited twenty-six states, several major cities, and universities, including Stanford, the University of Chicago, Cornell, and Yale. But he also got an eyeful of America's landscapes and everyday life. He was frankly agog seeing American prosperity: the abundance of automobiles, the wonders of indoor plumbing, the good life of American farmers. He marveled at American industry and high-tech agriculture—seeding crops by airplanes, for example—and wonders such as automat cafeterias and (as a lifelong smoker) vending machines full of Pall Malls, Philip Morrises, Chesterfields, and Camels.[81] He realized that Hollywood films and Soviet propaganda had led Indonesians to certain false impressions. He found Americans decent, good-natured, polite, and—middle-class Americans at least—religious. He noted that most American families said grace before meals, and he wrote warmly about American parents teaching their little children to say their prayers at bedtime.[82] Hamka expressed admiration for American public discipline, as in not throwing trash away willy-nilly, and compared it favorably to Indonesia. He especially admired the country's educational system, its hundreds of universities, and its belief in upward mobility and self-improvement through learning.[83] And he liked the way that immigrants to the United States from all corners of the earth said, "I am an American."[84]

But there was another side to American life. Even well-to-do Americans lived with fear; there were air-raid-siren drills in every city for possible attacks by "Communist airplanes."[85] And there was also poverty and racism. Hamka took note of American slums and drunks and panhandlers and prostitutes, and he astutely described the colonial situation of African Americans.[86] "The attitude toward black-skinned Negroes of American white people is nearly identical," he wrote, "to the attitude of the Dutch toward Indonesians when Indonesia was still colonized, or like the attitude of the French toward the Arabs of the Maghreb."[87] African Americans performed the lowest, meanest jobs; lived in segregated neighborhoods; and rode in the backs of buses and planes. In Texas and elsewhere in the South, he was disgusted to observe, they were required to use separate waiting rooms, toilets, and restaurants—even separate churches. For these reasons, he told his readers, some African Americans were attracted to Communism—as the great singer and actor Paul Robeson had been—and others to Islam.[88]

Hamka's most unsettling encounter with racism in America, however, was with his own. Why, he asked himself, when about to meet someone new or to enter a restaurant full of people, did he sometimes feel heavyhearted and reluctant to go through with it? It was because of the "fear, shame, and deference towards white people that had been planted by the Dutch" in the souls of his ancestors and grandparents "and in my father, my mother, myself, and everyone around me." He wrote, "I fought this until it went away."[89]

Hamka was particularly critical of American gender relations and what he called—still using the Dutch term in the 1950s—*vrij omgang*: the free association between the sexes that he always associated with the West. He was shocked at Americans' apparent lack of modesty; women wore bikini bathing suits, and both sexes thought nothing of appearing naked in front of each other in same-sex locker rooms and showers. He heard that some college girls carried anti-pregnancy pills in their purses. These signs of moral breakdown, he said, were the by-product of the West's shift from agrarian lifeways to urban-industrial ones. Indonesia would soon make the same shift and possibly with the same consequences, he warned.[90]

Despite such flaws in the American way of life, Hamka was unabashedly impressed. Could Indonesians ever achieve what Americans have achieved? This is the hope underlying all of Hamka's talk about America and the West.

What was holding Indonesia back was not its natural resources, he said. Our country has plenty of rubber, tin, oil, copper, and other things. It is our own people and their lack of confidence and self-respect, their "weak personalities." It is no wonder that Eastern people are "blinded by the progress of the West."[91] We should embrace the West's confidence and dynamism and knowledge. But we should also remember that there was a time when the West was equally dazzled by Muslim civilization.[92] The basis of that brilliant civilization—Islam itself—endures. It should be the basis for our advancement today. If we embrace it wholeheartedly, he wrote, "our people can also advance."[93]

Hamka's 1952 trip to the United States was his only sustained exposure to the West. He called upon his memories of it for the rest of his life.

Hamka's early 1950s traveler's tales were thoroughly autobiographical. In recounting his experiences and reactions great and small—today an interview with a great Egyptian writer, tomorrow a visit to the pyramids, with photograph—Hamka is an ever-chatty tour guide.[94] By this time he was an expert at connecting small things to large ones. Flying to Egypt from Jeddah in October 1950, he tells us, he is plied with coffee, cakes, and Coca-Cola by an attractive Egyptian stewardess (he digresses to discuss the best terms for "steward" and "stewardess" in Indonesian). Looking down from the plane, he

sees the Red Sea. He remembers his childhood years in Qur'an school and gathering with his brothers and sisters to hear his father tell the story of Moses, which he then proceeds to retell.[95] All of this—the airplane, the Coca-Cola, the Indonesian language, Egypt, the famous Muslim scholar, stories from the Qur'an, and, of course, he himself, the conspicuously Indonesian writer and traveler—all of this, he seems to be saying, is part of our Great Story.

Writing from abroad (or about it), Hamka told his readers that his thoughts were often of home. At the end of his four-month-long journey around the United States, he wrote, in a typically Hamkaesque passage invoking his boyhood home beside the lake, that when "my body was still in America, the coconut trees on my beautiful shoreline were waving, the areca-nut trees swayed by my mother's garden. And the southern winds howled as they ushered along the boats of my fisherfolk. The clouds amassed in the mountaintops—all of this was calling me to . . . come home . . . come home . . . come home!"[96]

Lessons

Accounts like these amid a steady flow of other articles and books embellished ever more thoroughly Hamka's Great Story of Islam and Indonesia. These culminated in 1956 with Hamka's *Pelajaran Agama Islam* (Lessons in Islam), an extensive catechism of Islam's fundamental teachings compiled explicitly for Indonesians. Hamka promised his readers a "new approach" that would diverge from the "dos and don'ts" of *fiqh* law manuals and that offered instead cogent explanations of Islam's articles of belief, or Six Pillars of Faith.[97] These are (1) that God is One and the creator of all things; (2) that there exists, beyond the human senses, an unseen realm of angels and demons and other supernatural creatures; (3) that God has instructed humans through certain holy books, including the Torah of Moses, the Psalms of David, the Gospels of Jesus, and, finally and perfectly, the Holy Qur'an; (4) that God has also sent messengers, or prophets, to reveal God to humans, including Moses, David, and Jesus and culminating with Muhammad; (5) that humans will be subject to God's judgment on the Last Day; and (6) that God's will is all encompassing and that we are bound by it.

In explaining the Pillars of Faith, Hamka writes (invoking a famous rhyme) that he will bring together Islam's teachings on both "*aqal* and *naqal*," that is, on the distinction in Islam between what may be grasped through intellect, on the one hand, and what must be accepted on faith, on the other.[98]

There is much, he writes, that we Muslims simply believe, based on our acceptance of God's revelation through the prophets and the Qur'an and

Hadith. This includes the miracles of the prophets as recorded in the Qur'an—the cane of Moses, Nabi Musa, *did* become a snake that consumed the evil snakes of Egypt's shamans, and Jesus, Nabi Isa, *did* cure a leper and bring a dead man back to life—as well as the existence of angels and demons and the vivid horrific prophecies surrounding the Last Day in the Qur'an and Hadith. Such accounts are beyond the understanding of human beings; we must simply accept them as part of the true revelation of God. Like our belief in the prophets and in the perfection of the Qur'an as God's truth, he says, they are articles of *faith*. We are required to believe them, even if we can't understand them.

But there is much that we *can* understand. Throughout the centuries, Muslim thinkers have labored to understand God's revelation both intellectually and spiritually. This is especially true of the period following Islam's expansion into the Mediterranean world and its exposure to classical Greek civilization and the ideas of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.[99] Drawing upon these ideas, Muslim scholars, philosophers, poets, and artists achieved new heights of knowledge and civilization and brought fresh intellectual vigor to matters of Islamic doctrine and faith. This "philosophical" approach yielded great insights, writes Hamka, and also great arguments. We can still learn from them.

The Mutazilites, for example, elevated the human capacity for reason and "freedom of thought" in the quest to understand God and the created world.[100] They emphasized God's simplicity and unity, rejecting all attempts to understand God anthropomorphically or to engage in pietistic devotion to sacred objects such as the Qur'an.[101] In doing so, writes Hamka, they performed a great service by "shaping a conversation about faith in philosophical terms."[102] Even so, and with the purest of intentions, they sometimes exceeded the bounds of religion proper, so not all of their conclusions can be accepted by mainstream Sunni Muslims, or, as Hamka puts it, "the group that follows the straight path laid out by Prophet Muhammad."[103] Other scholars steeped in the philosophical tradition, including followers of the Ash'ariyya school, made counterarguments rejecting freedom of thought in favor of literal interpretations of the Qur'an and Hadith, thus establishing the two enduring poles of Islamic theology.[104]

In *Lessons*, Hamka draws heavily upon both sides and attempts to strike a balance. Al-Ghazali, for example, the eleventh-century Baghdad theologian, restored the teachings of the mystic Sufis to Sunni Islam. Hamka applauded this and emulated it in his famous book of the 1930s, *Modern Sufism.* Indeed, Hamka cites al-Ghazali's authority repeatedly.[105] But al-Ghazali was also implicated in Islam's decline. His authoritative rejection of the rationalists' law of cause and effect—as advanced by Ibn Rushd and Ibn Sina in the eleventh

and twelfth centuries—led to the atrophy of Muslim science and to centuries of intellectual and spiritual torpor. Rejected by Muslims, Ibn Rushd's teaching spread across Christian Europe and led to the modern scientific revolution. As a result, writes Hamka, at a time when Muslims still believed in flying carpets and *imam*s who prayed with fish on the river bottom, Western scientists actually invented the airplane and the submarine.[106]

This is a good example of Hamka's oft-noted celebration of intellect and his call for Indonesian Muslims to think and to act. In *Lessons*, however, he lays down the limits of thinking and acting, treading a fine line as he does so. In the chapter "Belief in Fate, Qadla and Qadar," for example, he asks, "Are people free or are they bound?" Several pages later, he answers: "We [humans] have no power whatsoever."[107] After all, we do not choose when and where we are born, how tall we will be, what we will look like, or what the color of our skin or hair will be. We cannot choose to be rich or poor. We cannot know the time of our death. In our lives we are subject to all sorts of unanticipated boons and catastrophes. One day everything is fine. The next brings a typhoon that destroys everything.[108] Our lives are but infinitesimal parts of God's great plan. "Nothing escapes fate, or God's will."[109]

And yet, we humans have been given the special gift of intellect and have been urged by God in the Qur'an to use it.[110] Does this mean that we possess agency after all? Is there free will in life? Hamka answers that this is a question that Muslim scholars disagree about. There are Qur'anic verses in support of both sides, Hamka writes, and he gives five of each. He concludes that both points of view are part of a larger truth. Were it not for a strong belief in fate and God's controlling hand—and the willingness of early believers to face death as part of God's great plan—it would have been impossible for Islam to expand so triumphantly in its early years. Moreover, in times of triumph and prosperity, believing in fate helps Muslims to understand that it is God's power at work, not their own. But in times of decline and defeat, God's call for individual initiative gives believers hope that they can change things for the better—and also deters them from blaming everything on God.[111] Indeed, under such circumstances, we are called upon to exert ourselves to the utmost.

How foolish it would be for a man floundering in the waves to leave the outcome up to fate. He should swim for his life![112] In the same way, rice does not grow on its own. We humans must prepare the paddy fields, plant them in a timely fashion, and protect the growing rice from pests. When the crop prospers, "we may say that it is the consequence of our own efforts," understanding, of course, that rice itself is a gift of God.[113] But if we don't make the

effort, the rice won't grow. Plagues, pests, and floods are not our doing. This is fate at work. Even so, we would be wrong to accept such catastrophes passively, blaming them on God. Instead, we should exert ourselves to prevent and mitigate them using every resource at our disposal. (In Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Africa, he writes, they spray crop-saving pesticides from airplanes.)[114] Indeed, if we simply waited on fate, "there would be no progress in the life of humanity."[115]

This is what happened to Muslims in the age of decline: "They didn't exert themselves any longer." Instead, they blamed all their troubles on God and "fell into a valley of shame, ignorance, poverty, and misery."[116] They succumbed to fantasies and tall tales of flying carpets and clung to dreams of a coming savior, or Mahdi.[117] In the meantime, their lands were overtaken by their enemies, and "they became slaves."[118] This is a corrupted understanding of fate. It is true that God orders everything in nature and the universe. And it is true that, in this greater scheme of things, "we have no power at all." Even so, as Muslims, we are called by God to use "every ounce of initiative that we possess."[119]

In *Lessons*, Hamka argues powerfully that the core belief of Islam—that God is one and that God is creator of the universe—is self-evident to every thinking person and that, moreover, it becomes more self-evident with every new discovery of modern science. Think of the intricate order of nature, of how protons and neutrons and electrons form atoms and how atoms combine to form not just anything, willy-nilly, but an unimaginably diverse array of discrete objects, plants, and animals, including humans. Ask yourself why only mangoes grow on mango trees and durians on durian trees. Consider the coconut seed and how a soft tendril grows within it and becomes so strong that it breaks open the shell and grows to the sky. Think about this: "A newborn baby has no teeth yet. There is milk! Its teeth come in but are still soft. There are bananas! Its stomach matures. The teeth have grown strong!"[120] The more we know of nature, he writes, the more amazing it is. Every advance in physics, chemistry, geography, and mathematics provides further confirmation of God's existence. (These advances even confirm the possibility of total destruction as prophesied at the Last Day, the Day of Judgment.)[121] This is probably why al-Ghazali wrote that, of all things, "God is easiest to know."[122]

It is not only nature's order that leads us to God. It is also its beauty. Think of the great open seas and of hills and mountains, of the sun rising and setting, and of the beautiful shapes and colors of living things. Think of "the soft winds that blow through a bamboo grove at the forest's edge, creating a squeaking sound as one branch rubs against another."[123] Think of the stars sparkling in

the expanse of the night sky. We are spellbound by the beauty of it all, he writes, and in our enchantment "there leaps unconsciously from our mouths an expression that more truly comes from our hearts: Allah!"[124]

People have intuitively sensed the existence of God from the very beginning, but they have often expressed this by worshiping the sun and stars and animals and myriad shrines and idols and even their rulers, such as the pharaohs of Egypt. This is precisely why God sent the prophets, to channel this intuition away from polytheism and superstition and other mistaken beliefs toward monotheism.[125] For although the gift of intellect equips human beings with the capacity to recognize the existence of God, it does not equip them to understand the *nature* of God—God's love, compassion, and mercy. For this, divine revelation (*wahyu*) is needed. God has provided this through the prophets.[126]

Humans are easily led astray. Among the mistaken beliefs embraced by Christians are the divinity of Jesus, the Trinity, and the worship of Mary. Among Muslims there have been numerous breakaway sects, such as the Bahá'ís and the Ahmadiyahs.[127] There is also the ubiquitous practice in the Muslim world of making pilgrimages to the gravesites of revered *shaykh*s, to seek blessings and favors—a practice that invariably implies gifts or fees offered to the shrines' caretakers and to beggars amassing nearby.[128] (Here Hamka tells a story from his trip to Egypt, where at the gravesite of a certain Shaykh Rifa'i he witnessed a young woman exposing her naked thighs while writhing on the floor in an apparent trance of supplication, in hopes of a husband or a child.[129])

But there are plenty of examples in Indonesia, too, he writes, where people attach magical powers to daggers (*keris*) and to sacred gravesites and where many a tall tale about the mystical powers of *ulama*s is passed on as true, such as the Javanese *wali*, or saint, who prayed weekly at the Haram Mosque in Mecca without ever actually leaving Java.[130] Hamka tells the story of the mystical power (*keramat*) contest in Mecca at which a revered Indonesian saint is challenged to produce, on the spot, a fruit from Indonesia and does so miraculously by pulling a rambutan or durian from his robes. "In Minangkabau, I heard this story about the *keramat* of Sjech Burhanuddin. But when I went to Aceh, I heard it about Sjech Abdur Rauf; in Java, about Sjech Sunan Bonang or Sjech Siti Djenar; and in Makassar exactly the same story about Sjech Jusuf!"[131] We are not required to believe in such ridiculous things, nor are we required to believe some of the fables to be found in certain weak Hadith, such as the story of the rooster that lives between heaven and earth and that crows daily at dawn, signaling to roosters around the world that they should crow, too.[132]

But we *are* required to believe certain genuinely miraculous things, such as the miracles of the prophets, the Qur'an's description of life after death, and

the supernatural realm of the angels Jibril (Gabriel) and Mikail (Michael) and countless other angels great and small who inhabit the unseen world and do God's bidding, recording our every word and deed and arriving to help us in times of need or danger. The angels, he writes, are to be neither worshiped, nor beseeched for blessings, nor feared. This includes Iblis, or Satan, who also inhabits the unseen world along with evil spirits and ghosts.[133]

To illustrate his own belief in the supernatural, Hamka recounts his encounters with mortal danger during the recent revolution. He tells of the Dutch airplanes that chose not to fire as they passed above his small boat moving across Lake Maninjau. He tells of his narrow escape from a mobile Dutch patrol after fleeing with Hizbullah scouts into the high grass of a nearby hilltop and of other near misses. In all of these events, he writes, something supernatural was in play. On the day he narrowly escaped the Dutch patrol, he says, he felt a familiar flutter of warning in his temples that led him to warn the group and to flee just in time; then, as Dutch soldiers scanned the hills for rebels, he began praying out loud, uttering passages from the Qur'an. Perhaps it was this that blinded the Dutch soldiers, rendering Hamka and his companions unobserved.[134] On other occasions while on the run he heard strange sounds in the night and had urgent premonitions of danger; once he heard a voice urging him to "leave promptly before eight o'clock in the morning."[135] These experiences cannot be proved or understood scientifically, he said, but for him they were evidence of spiritual forces at work "all around me" and evidence, too, that his own predestined time of death, or *ajal*, had not yet arrived.[136]

With these autobiographical stories, Hamka consciously situates his *Lessons* in Indonesia. He also invokes the Indonesian landscape and flora and fauna, as he does in this sentence about the nondivinity of Jesus: "It's not Jesus who makes the mango skin bitter and the insides sweet."[137] And he makes a point of referring to the great *ulama*s of Indonesia's past—as in his story of the mystical power contest—and of drawing examples from the country's far-flung regions. At one point, revealing a real-life frustration, he tells his readers that approaching God is easier than meeting with Indonesian officials, whose officious gatekeepers keep you waiting in an anteroom for "ten minutes, twenty minutes, two hours" as other, more important people breeze right in.[138] Unlike in many of his other writings, in *Lessons* Hamka seldom refers to Indonesian political leaders, perhaps reflecting rivalries surrounding the elections of mid-decade, exactly when he was writing this book. He even warns of the dangers of nationalism, which, in its most excited form, can lead to *sjirk*, or polytheism: the sin of equating something or someone other than God with God. Even so, Indonesia is ever present in *Lessons.* As Hamka writes in his introduction, "From

belief, or faith, individuals form their personalities and their characters," and this in turn shapes their "society and the economy, social structure, and culture of their nation."[139]

Hamka's *Lessons in Religion* is a lengthy book full of quotations from the Qur'an and Hadith given in Arabic with Indonesian translations. To the vast majority of Indonesian readers it had all the heft and authority of scholarship, although in fact it was a work of popularization. Even so, *Lessons* was an original book in its philosophical approach to explaining Islam's articles of faith and in its integration of rationalist, *sufi*, and mainstream Sunni approaches to the Pillars.[140] It makes for serious reading. Hamka didn't write down to his readers. This is perhaps an important subtext of the book and of much of his writing: it demonstrated for his literate but not highly educated readers a lively mind at work, a life of learning, and, implicitly, the vital link between thinking and believing.

In the final pages of *Lessons*, Hamka returns to a big theme of his famous book of the late 1930s, *Modern Sufism*. What if we simply withdrew from the day-to-day world to escape temptation and to contemplate God in solitude instead of pursuing lives of faith and good character in the hurly-burly of society at large?[141] What kind of society would Indonesia become? There are some good signs in our society. Yet the evidence of moral decline is all around us, and, truth to tell, many Muslim families fail to instruct their children properly. What we believe determines how we live. The contribution we can make to Indonesia—the good work of our lives and careers and families living actively in society—all begins with our faith. And faith begins within ourselves.[142]

Early in his *Lessons*, Hamka describes how Islam spread from the Arabian Peninsula to embrace people of all kinds, "each with their own customs and life views that, each in their own way, contributed to creating Muslim Civilization."[143] This became the big theme in yet another series of books from these same years, his multivolume *Sejarah Umat Islam* (History of the Muslim people). Hamka had written on historical topics from his earliest days as a fledgling writer. *Society's Compass*, his Medan weekly, was full of short articles on the history of Islam. In the late 1930s, when he was writing most of his famous stories and his early pathbreaking books such as *Modern Sufism*, Hamka also began work on a proper history of Islam and finished the first volume. But wartime and paper shortages delayed its publication for ten years. In the meantime, he placed the manuscript in a chest and carried it with him as he moved, sometimes urgently, from Medan to Padang Panjang, from there to the lake, and finally to Jakarta.[144]

The first volume of his *History* thus appeared amid the flood of new Hamka books in 1950 and 1951 and just in time for the new country's massive expansion

of public education. (In addition to middle and high schools, four new institutes for the study of Islam had been established by 1958.)[145] A second volume appeared in 1952 and a third in 1960. In great detail, these books trace the history of Islam, from Muhammad's revelation in Arabia to the early years of Muslim consolidation, the rise of the first caliphs, and the expansion of Islam into North Africa, Spain, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, and India. They also take up the calamitous impact of the Crusades and the subsequent atrophy of Muslim societies as the West made its dramatic ascent to dominance. Hamka drew upon this material repeatedly in his other writings, especially the events having to do with Islam's genesis and with the great scholars and literati of the golden age. And he often alluded to Islam's decline in the age of modern colonialism, which led in turn to the dynamic movements for reform and renewal of his own lifetime. "Islam has suffered many trials, and has often fallen," he wrote. "But it rises again, and stands again, and moves forward again! Islam doesn't die."[146] Indeed, Islam's capacity for renewal was a key theme in Hamka's Great Story. The final volume in the series, published in 1961, describes how Indonesia became a part of the world of Islam.

Hamka was not, of course, a scholar of history. He relied for the most part on the work of others. But he was an inveterate researcher and reader with a brilliant capacity for synthesis and popular narrative writing.[147] (In introducing *History* to readers, he said, "In compiling this book, I read some one hundred books large and small and paid special attention to modern works of history." Without enumerating what those books were, exactly, he went on, "Then I assembled the book, paragraph by paragraph."[148]) In the introduction to the volume about Indonesia, he said that he had consulted the *Sejarah Melayu*, *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai*, *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, and other classical Malay sources, as well as historical chronicles from Java. But he warned that these primary sources were full of myths and tall tales. He was also indebted to Dutch and English scholars for their deep studies of early Islam in Indonesia, although this scholarship was flawed, too, by colonial and Christian biases. To complement these sources he had collected during his travels many rare historical materials from old people whom he met and from sultans who showed him precious heirloom documents from which he made copious notes.[149]

As a preacher and a storyteller, Hamka loved the details and anecdotes that filled the pages of history books and that he deftly retold to make his sermons and lessons colorful and meaty. But history also held deeper lessons for Indonesians that spoke to the roots and character of the new nation. For some Indonesian intellectuals, these roots were to be found in the former Hindu-Buddhist empires of Java and the archipelago. Mohammad Yamin, for

example, declared that "Indonesia" had always existed. "We can speak only of Indonesian history," he wrote in 1928; there is "no separate history of Java, Sumatra, Borneo, or Celebes."[150] In Yamin's view, the Hindu-Buddhist kingdom of Majapahit, whose power extended from Java across much of the archipelago, was an earlier manifestation of the Indonesian nation: a glorious past prefigured a glorious present. Hamka rejected this Java-centric view of history. Instead, in the final volume of his *History of the Muslim People*, Hamka described how Islam had penetrated the island world slowly, over centuries, and how it shaped the many diverse societies that ultimately *became* Indonesia.

Bearers of Islam, he wrote, reached Java within fifty-three years of its establishment by the Prophet Muhammad in Arabia. In 675 CE, ambassadors from the Damascus court of Caliph Muawiyah approached the Hindu ruler of Kalingga on their way to China.[151] Ten years later, he said, Arab traders established a colony in West Sumatra.[152] Symbolically, these facts are important in Hamka's Great Story because they reveal that "Muslims arrived in the Malay archipelago (in other words, Indonesia) during Islam's first century"; moreover, they came directly from the Middle East—and not, as Western scholars emphasized, much later and primarily through India.[153] Following these initial beachheads, he explained, the new religion spread slowly through the efforts of Arab merchants who dominated the Indian Ocean trade to China from bases in Persia and India. Over time, some of these traders formed small resident communities in coastal port towns, married into local families, and gained influence with rulers. And this led, in turn, to the region's first Muslim kingdoms of record. By the tenth century, Brunei (on the north coast of Borneo) was ruled by a Muslim sultan with Arab advisers.[154] By the thirteenth century, Muslim sultans in Pasai, North Sumatra, took their names from Egyptian Mamluk kings.[155] And in the sixteenth century, he reported, the ruler of Demak on Java became head of the island's first Muslim kingdom following the collapse of his former suzerain, the Hindu-Buddhist kingdom of Majapahit.

As these formal states emerged, communities of Muslim believers formed ever more rapidly elsewhere, penetrating from coastal enclaves into the large interior societies where forms of Hindu-Buddhism and animism held sway.[156] And as once-great Hindu-Buddhist and Buddhist kingdoms such as Majapahit and the Sumatra-based Sri Vijaya fragmented and collapsed, Muslim ones rose in their wake. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Melaka and then Aceh became great centers of Muslim power in Southeast Asia, attracting merchants and scholars from the Middle East, Turkey, Persia, and India and radiating Islam into neighboring territories. By the early seventeenth century, Hamka wrote, there were Muslim kingdoms in Java (Mataram, Bantam, and Cirebon),

Aceh, Johore, Ternate, Tidore, and Melaka.[157] By this time, Islam was well on its way to becoming the hegemonic religious culture of the archipelago.

What explains Islam's slow but sure advance among the islands? By and large, Hamka wrote, Islam spread to Indonesia through persuasion, not force. There was no invading army. And although power struggles between Muslim and non-Muslim kings and pretenders certainly played a part (as in the downfall of Java's Majapahit), for the most part, he concluded, the advance of Islam depended upon the "strength of character and faith of those who spread it." Where Muslims proselytized with fervor, Islam prospered, he said; where they didn't, it languished.[158]

The role of faith and fervor came to matter deeply in the centuries that followed. The political triumph of Islamic kingdoms like Melaka and Mataram coincided with the arrival of the West in Southeast Asia. By 1511 the Portuguese had conquered the sultanate of Melaka, and during the following two centuries the Dutch conquered or subordinated several nascent Muslim states, including those of Java. Muslim kingdoms, wrote Hamka, "became vassals that rose because the Dutch raised them up and that lived because the Dutch rendered them alive."[159] With the Europeans came Christian missionaries. Despite all this, Islam survived. The sultans had been the initial "fortresses" of Islam, it is true, but as colonialism took hold, it was the strong faith of Muslim people themselves that assured its survival.[160] Here Hamka is striking a familiar chord in his Great Story. When it comes to creating a true Muslim society—as he often pointed out—it's not up to the state, it's up to us!

Hamka's *History* ends in the seventeenth century as European colonialism takes hold throughout Southeast Asia and long before the Dutch completed their conquest of the entire Indies. He anticipated writing a final volume of *History* to fill in the missing years. But this project was overtaken by others and by the culture wars and turbulent events of the 1960s and 1970s. Perhaps he anticipated this when, in his as-yet-incomplete *History*, he leapt to the present and foreshadowed the next chapter in his Great Story. "And subsequently," he wrote, "all of this Islamic awakening and awareness became one with the 'nationalist' movement, so that the freedom of Indonesia from Dutch colonialism was achieved on August 17, 1945."[161]

Into Politics

During the revolution Hamka had sworn off politics, but in the 1950s he was inevitably drawn in again. He participated actively in the congresses and meetings of the day, joining both the public debates and the behind-the-scenes

palaver and strategizing.[162] Among the offices that Hamka frequented in Jakarta was the national headquarters of Masjumi, where he served on the advisory council (Dewan Pimpinan Masjumi).[163] He was a regular at the Masjumi "lunch club," too, where the senior leaders shared news and intelligence.[164] Masjumi represented what Hamka called Indonesia's "Islamic Front" (Barisan Ummat Islam) and was a loosely organized confederation of moderate and traditionalist leaders and their organizations, including the Java-based Nahdlatul Ulama (NU).[165]

Strains within the "front" were extraordinary and reflected both cultural and regional differences. Compared to NU, Muhammadiyah, although founded on Java, was now stronger outside Java in Sumatra and Sulawesi. Doctrinal differences also divided the two groups: many of the beliefs and practices that were anathema to modernists like Hamka—residual elements of what M. C. Ricklefs has called Java's "mystic synthesis" of animism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam—continued to be embraced by NU's Javanese followers.[166] In 1952 Nahdlatul Ulama withdrew from Masjumi's umbrella structure to strike out on its own.

A complicating factor was Darul Islam (House of Islam), an armed separatist movement with roots in the revolution that sought to establish an Islamic state in place of the secular republic. In the early 1950s this movement, under the charismatic leader Kartosuwirjo, controlled "much of the countryside of West Java."[167] Hamka feared that the rebellion was inflaming an already deep-seated fear of Islam among Indonesia's Westernized elite, "who were educated for decades by the Dutch" and "taught to hate Islam."[168] "Time and again we say that Masjumi is not Darul Islam," he wrote to Emzita in 1954. "We don't want to replace the nation that was proclaimed on August 17, 1945, with another kind of nation." What we want, he said, "is to fill the 'vessel' with Islam."[169]

Hamka had asserted and reasserted this position since 1945, and it angered him to feel beleaguered over the matter of loyalty. After all, Muslims had played key roles in winning independence; he mentions the Muslim students who poured out from their prayerhouses onto the battlefield and leaders such as Haji Agus Salim, Sudirman, Syafruddin, and Mohammad Roem. "These days," he wrote, "we are stigmatized as 'others,' as troublemakers, and as boarders in the nation."[170]

In a sense, Hamka had lived his whole life in an arena of urgently contested ideas. The culture wars of his youth pitted a "young generation" (*kaum muda*) of religious reformers against an "older generation" (*kaum tua*) of traditionalists. When anticolonial ideas took hold, nascent Communists competed with Islam-influenced nationalists, revolutionaries with gradualists. United against

the Dutch during the revolution, Indonesians were otherwise almost incoherently fragmented. In West Sumatra, where Hamka briefly led the National Defense Front, some fifty-six organized factions had jostled for influence and resources, representing a spectrum from Communist to feudal.[171]

The failure of the Republic's government to cohere after independence reflected the vitality of these unresolved contests, as well as the immaturity and weakness of the new state's institutions and infrastructure and its inherent ethnic rivalries.[172] Hamka always understood that he was in a fight and that devout Muslim modernists needed to persuade ever-larger numbers of their fellow Indonesians of the rightness of their path. This had been an objective of Muhammadiyah from the very beginning, and it was Hamka's personal mission—the underlying purpose of his Great Story. Independence raised the stakes. Sukarno had been the "big spirit" of the revolutionary movement, but even his spirit was not big enough to resolve the complex power struggles that now ensued. In these power struggles, Hamka's own set of hopes, which mirrored generally those of the organized Muslim modernists for whom Muhammadiyah spoke, conflicted with those of others. What he embraced, others rejected and feared.

Why this was true reflected not only conflicting ideological and theological orientations but also other variables such as ethnicity, regionalism, social hierarchy, and the urban-rural divide—all of which factored into political constellations associated with specific political parties. By the mid-1950s, when Indonesia held its first national elections, there were four major constellations. Masjumi represented the Muhammadiyah-inclined modernists. Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) represented the largely Java-based Muslim traditionalists, led by revered and power-wielding *ulama*s (known as *kyai*s in Java) whose religious academies dotted the countryside and whose theology and culture embraced precisely the kinds of mystic elements and loyalty to outdated law manuals (*kitab kuning*) that the modernists wanted to cull. The Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI) was Sukarno's party, although he did not lead it. It coalesced around the president's personal charisma and romantic nationalism (to which Hamka himself was attracted). Ideologically, it stood for Panca Sila, the Five Principles of Indonesian nationhood, which Sukarno had formulated and which were enshrined in the 1945 constitution: (1) belief in one Almighty God; (2) nationalism, or the unity of Indonesia; (3) internationalism and humanitarianism; (4) social justice; and (5) government by consent (or as Sukarno himself called it, "Democracy à la Indonesia").[173] Politically speaking, Panca Sila implied a nation that was not dominated by any one religion—meaning, in this context, not dominated by Islam.

Finally, by the mid-1950s, the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) had made a breathtaking comeback since its defeat and ostracism during the revolution. Under the pragmatic leadership of Aidit, Lukman, Njoto, and Sudisman and with its anticolonial-cum-antifeudal message tailored convincingly to Indonesian circumstances, the party grew from fewer than 200,000 members in March 1954 to a million at the end of 1955 and, in the process, created a web of party-linked labor, peasant, and youth organizations across Indonesia, but with its strongholds in Central and East Java.[174] Aside from its growing grassroots constituency, the party attracted many of Indonesia's young artists and intellectuals to its message, if not always to the party itself. In the culture wars of the times, they would prove to be effective infighters. Although Indonesia's Communist Party did not assertively promote atheism (many of its members were at least nominally Muslim), when analyzing Indonesia's predicament, its leaders did tend to treat Islam and its religious leadership as part of the problem, not part of the solution.[175]

Hamka's encounter with Communism began when he was still a boy, when he witnessed vicious attacks upon his father, Haji Rasul, by Rasul's own students turned Communist. During the revolution in West Sumatra, he witnessed Communist-affiliated youth bands terrorizing defenseless villagers—not the only ones to do so, he says, however—and he was a passionate supporter of Sukarno's and Hatta's decision to denounce the party following its takeover attempt at Madiun.[176] Among his good friends in Medan, however, had been the Communist-leaning Anwar Kadir and Xarim M. S.[177] And he so respected Tan Malaka (who had opposed the PKI's midrevolution rebellion) that in his memoirs Hamka suggested that Tan Malaka might have led the revolution if Sukarno and Hatta were taken out of play.[178] As we have noted, Hamka made a point in his post-1945 writings to address key Communist teachings and to explain how they differed from Muslim teachings, despite their common emphasis on human equality and social justice. By the mid-1950s, these issues became less abstract as PKI leaders and intellectuals moved aggressively back into the political arena. (As they did so, Hamka became a sometime figure of fun, as in the 1954 article in the party's daily, *Harian Rakjat*, "Hamka Can Speak Foreign Languages," in which he is quoted "imitating Shakespeare," saying, "Bilif or nit bilif."[179])

A small example of the Left's new energy occurred at the 1955 meeting of the Congress of National Culture, organized by the Badan Musyawarah Kebudayaan Nasional (Consultative Body for National Culture, or BMKN), an organization of young writers and artists of multiple persuasions. Hamka served as mentor to several young members of the group's Reform Islam–oriented faction,

including Sidi Gazalba and H. Amura. At the organization's previous congress in 1953, Hamka had made his case for an Islam-infused national society. By 1955 his protégés found themselves beleaguered by left-wing members affiliated with the Institute of People's Culture, the Communist Party's literary organization, known famously by its acronym, Lekra (short for Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat). Its delegates, including A. S. Darta and the artist Sujoyono, moved aggressively to "redden" the body. Energized by Hamka, Gazalba and the others managed to fend off the Lekra challenge for the moment. But privately they began planning for a strictly Islam-based cultural congress to compete with the growing forces of the Left. It was a small sign of the times.[180]

The elections of the same year—to elect a national parliament and a separate assembly to write a new constitution—brought Indonesia's brewing power struggle into the public political arena. Hamka agreed to run as a Masjumi "vote getter" in the elections for the constitutional assembly, or Konstituante. Standing as a candidate in Central Java, he won handily in an area where, generally speaking, Masjumi fared poorly. This is a telling measure of his celebrity status in the new Republic. Hamka thus entered officially the roiling debates surrounding what kind of nation Indonesia should be.

The elections revealed the country's fissures. Masjumi performed strongly and won nearly 21 percent of the vote, bettered only by the Sukarno-linked party, the PNI, with 22.3 percent. Running close behind these two leaders was the Java-based NU of the Muslim traditionalists, with 18.4 percent. And finally, but also showing remarkable strength, was the Indonesian Communist Party, with 16.4 percent.[181] These election results did not lead to a national mandate. In order to marginalize the nascent Communists, PNI prime minister Ali Sastroamidjojo formed a coalition with the two Muslim parties. But the new parliamentary government proved ineffectual. In the face of the country's crippling political impasse, Sukarno as president publicly berated the parties and began dropping hints that "democracy à la Indonesia" needed less party politics and more "guidance."[182]

In December 1956 disgruntled army officers initiated autonomy actions in Sumatra, to be followed in January 1957 by similar actions in Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Maluku—the key territories of Indonesia's so-called Outer Islands. Civilian support for these actions often included local Masjumi figures.[183] Mohammad Hatta, meanwhile, stepped down as vice president. Hatta was the country's senior Sumatran politician and a revolutionary icon. Hamka admired him immensely. When Masjumi's two coalition partners refused to resign in January to make way for a Hatta-led government (to help quell the Outer Islands crisis), Masjumi withdrew from the cabinet. About this time,

Hamka found that he was no longer welcome to approach Sukarno personally at the Istana Negara, or state palace.[184]

A power struggle of immense complexity was under way. It involved not only the parties but also the armed forces and President Sukarno himself as independent political forces. Against this backdrop, the constitutional assembly went about creating a new constitution for the Republic. Membership in the assembly resembled membership in parliament, in which nationalist, Muslim, and Communist factions dominated but in which Socialist, Catholic, Protestant, and independent delegates also held seats.[185] Hamka was part of a large bloc but not a controlling bloc. Although the deliberations of the assembly moved slowly, they proceeded amicably for the most part and, according to Robert Elson, achieved remarkable accord on a range of issues, particularly "the universal applicability of human rights." What the delegates could not agree upon was "the philosophical basis of the state."[186] Islam was the issue.

Hamka had embraced Indonesia in 1945 as it was. This included the original constitution, which described the new country as a secular state guided by certain immutable principles, namely, the Panca Sila, the first of which was belief in one Almighty God. He had always opposed any attempts to make Indonesia a Muslim theocracy. Instead, he consistently argued that affairs of state should be managed by statesmen and other experts. It is not the state that should be Islamic, he said, but the society, hence his oft-used image of "filling" Indonesia with Islam. (The ideal consequence, he said, would be the seamless integration of the two, thus his frequent assertion that, in Islam, there is no line dividing religion from the state.) In Indonesia's foundational years, Hamka believed and often asserted that the structure of the Indonesian state comported well with the goal of creating a Muslim society. In this he was in tune with Masjumi's other modernist leaders, such as Mohammad Natsir, who wrote in 1949, "The basis for an Islamic state can in large part be found in the constitution of the Republic."[187]

But the constitutional assembly was charged with writing a new constitution for Indonesia.[188] What then? Should Panca Sila remain as the philosophical basis for the country? Hamka now argued persuasively that it should not. "The authentic basis of our country . . . and the genuine identity of the Indonesian people," he said, "is Islam."[189] Contrary to Sukarno's claim that Panca Sila existed among the Indonesian people thousands of years ago (only to be reformulated by him in modern times), Hamka said that "Panca Sila has no historical basis in Indonesia."[190] At the time of the proclamation, he went on, only a few people were aware of Panca Sila, whereas "the vast majority of Indonesia's population professed 'the original foundation,' which is Islam."[191] Islam

drove the movement against the Dutch and inspired our fighters in the revolution. And it is "Allahu Akbar," not Panca Sila, that "greets you when you emerge from your mother's womb," that "becomes your defense when you face a great danger," and that you say "when death hovers over your head."[192]

Mohammad Natsir was another member of the constitutional assembly's Muslim bloc. He was national chair of Masjumi and Hamka's fellow Minangkabau and confidant. Hamka admired the articulate, Western-educated Natsir immensely, and they enjoyed an affectionate collegiality. (Although not born on the lake, Natsir had lived there as a boy when his father served as a Native clerk in the Dutch administrative offices in Maninjau; in the early 1950s, when he was prime minister, Natsir stopped by Hamka's house for late-night chats.)[193] On one occasion in 1957 when Natsir rose to speak for the beleaguered Masjumi position during debates in the assembly, Hamka improvised a poem and slipped it into Natsir's shirt pocket as he left the podium. "Where will Natsir go next, where will we go next?" it asks, depicting Natsir as a leader of righteous legions of "millions of like-minded friends who live and die together to strive for God's favor. And I am also entered on your roster."[194]

Meanwhile, outside the slow-moving assembly, Sukarno maneuvered with Communist support and the army to abandon the country's floundering parliamentary process altogether. In February 1957 he unveiled his plan for Guided Democracy, which, although it did not immediately abolish parliament, significantly side-lined it by creating a "mutual cooperation" (*gotong royong*) cabinet, including the PKI, to be advised by a national council of "functional groups"—representatives of workers, peasants, religious organizations, regions, and youth organizations.[195] Less than a month later, on March 14, 1957, Sukarno proclaimed martial law in the face of regional unrest and the outbreak of open rebellion in Sulawesi. The postelection cabinet of Ali Sastroamidjojo resigned, and, as Ricklefs writes, "parliamentary democracy, such as it had been in Indonesia, was dead."[196]

Masjumi vociferously protested these maneuvers, but Sukarno had allies in his own party and among the Communists, as well as, in large measure, in the NU, whose leaders found it practical to remain in Sukarno's good graces. By May 1957 Sukarno's national council had been established with a wide variety of functional-group representatives affiliated with the parties, but none from Masjumi. In months to follow, the Communists showed surging popular support in elections for provincial councils and maneuvered to gain Sukarno's favor by robustly supporting Guided Democracy. Masjumi responded in September by proclaiming that Communism was forbidden to Muslims and that the PKI must be outlawed.[197] Masjumi leaders were now targeted for harassment

by radical youth groups, and Natsir actually fled to Sumatra. In the constitutional assembly, as one of its members recalled later, speakers who uttered the Arabic greeting "Assalamu'alaikum" (peace be with you) were branded as "extreme right."[198]

Masjumi's slide from power accelerated in February 1958 when three of its senior leaders, Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, Burhanuddin Harahap, and Mohammad Natsir, joined a full-scale Sumatra-based rebellion. This had been prompted by the radical drift of Sukarno's government, as well as the expropriation of the rich Outer Islands oil and agribusiness revenues for needy Java. There were a host of other grievances as well.[199] The prominent role of Masjumi leaders in the Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia (Revolutionary Government of the Indonesian Republic, or PRRI)—Sjafruddin became prime minister—badly tainted the party. Its opponents now branded it not only reactionary but also traitorous, even though Masjumi did not support the rebellion officially.[200] The revelation of covert U.S. support for the rebels, delivered clumsily by the Central Intelligence Agency, further tainted the party's reputation.[201] Remarkably, Natsir remained the party chair for a year after the outset of the rebellion.[202] Masjumi was thus stigmatized as a right-wing party favoring the interests of the Outer Islands and in collusion with traitors to the Republic.

Even though Hamka did not support the rebellion, he was sensitive to its complaints. Writing in 1957 for readers in West Sumatra, he remarked on the "Javanization" of Indonesia and of the undue emphasis in the country's new schoolbooks on the history, language, and culture of Java. In one, he noted with dismay, the first principle of Panca Sila—belief in one Almighty God—was illustrated with a Buddha head from the ninth-century Javanese temple of Borobudur! Likewise, Javanese bureaucrats were fanning out throughout the nation and behaving like the arrogant Dutch officials of old, ignoring local customs and sensitivities. Like others, he wrote, "I also worry that the unity of our people will shatter." If this should occur, "we will know one of the reasons why."[203]

On the floor of the constitutional assembly, Hamka denounced Guided Democracy as "totalitarianism" and called Sukarno's national council a "state party."[204] All of Hamka's efforts in the assembly came to naught. In July 1958, in a last-minute maneuver to break the assembly's deadlock, army chief Abdul Haris Nasution proposed reinstating the 1945 constitution but adding the fabled Jakarta Charter—a passage, rejected by the founders, that would have required Muslims to obey Muslim law, or *shari'a*.[205] This was also voted down. In July 1959 Sukarno dissolved the ill-fated constitutional assembly and restored the 1945 constitution by decree, dashing any lingering hopes for an Islam-based

charter. Hamka accepted this defeat gracefully, saying, "All those who rejected [our point of view] are our brothers. They are all our people, friends of the same country. . . . The hallowed Red and White flies above all of us."[206]

This romantic statement reveals the extraordinary power for Hamka of the dream of a united Indonesia, despite the failure of its democracy and of his reform-minded Muslim compatriots to advance their cause politically. By August 1960 Sukarno had banned Masjumi altogether and marginalized its leaders.[207] Worse was soon to come. Hamka now understood completely how at odds his hopes for Indonesia—the fulfillment of his Great Story—were with other powerful forces in the society, dangerous forces on the rise.

5

Culture Wars

After moving to Jakarta in late 1949, Hamka had rented a small house in a rabbit warren–like neighborhood called Sawah Besar, or Big Paddy. He settled his family on Toa Hong Lane II, a site that still bore the marks of fresh construction. Chinese carpenters lived nearby, and visitors remember maneuvering around wooden beams and other building materials lying about in the lane.[1] Hamka and his wife, Siti Raham, or Ummi (Mother), as the family called her, now had seven children, and another was on the way.[2] In addition, the Ilyas brothers from West Sumatra—youths who assisted Hamka with secretarial and other chores—also lodged with the family from 1952 to 1955 alongside a stream of other houseguests.[3] This generous household soon became known for its hospitality, Ummi's good food, and Hamka's habit of rousing one and all for the early-morning prayers, shouting, "Get up, get up! Shalat, Allahu Akbar [Pray, God is great]!"[4]

It was here, late in the afternoon after he returned from his rounds in the city, that Hamka received visitors who came for advice and quiet consultations. Ghazali Sjahlan and Abdullah Salim, members of Masjumi's Yayasan Pesantren Islam (Muslim School Foundation), found him there one day sitting on the veranda wearing only a *sarung* and singlet (looking like "a Chinese peddler") and typing away madly. The foundation's mandate called for building a school and a mosque. The Ministry of Religion had already provided a limited start-up fund, and the mayor of Jakarta had donated a site: four hectares in the new suburban area of Kebayoran Baru. Now, explained the emissaries, the foundation needed to decide which to build first, the mosque or the school. Hamka didn't hesitate. "Build the mosque first," he told them.[5] But build it with plenty of office space and meeting rooms so that while the school building is still under construction, the mosque can initiate a full round of activities, including classes. With an impressive mosque in place, he said, donations will surely follow. Finally, he said, if you should go ahead with the mosque, "I promise to be at your service."[6]

Al-Azhar in Indonesia

The mosque rose slowly, and in 1956 Hamka moved to a new house directly across from the building site.[7] By the time he returned from an extensive trip to Pakistan and Egypt in 1958, the mosque had been completed, a great mosque, he said, that "is commensurate with the stature of a free Indonesia."[8] The building committee now waited for President Sukarno to cut the ribbon and open the mosque officially. But Hamka persuaded the committee to go ahead without the president and began leading prayers there immediately, including the congregational prayers on Friday.[9] Only a handful of people joined him at first, but as word spread the congregation grew rapidly. At the time, Kebayoran Baru was still a suburb under construction, with a few buildings and lots of undeveloped land covered with rambutan trees and cassava plants.[10] Among the first to join Hamka at the mosque were the carpenters, masons, and day laborers who worked at the mosque itself and at the upscale Mayestik shopping center being built nearby. But the new town gradually filled in with middle- and upper-class homes and markets as well-off families rushed to the suburbs and to the new mosque.

Mosque officials named Hamka chief *imam* (Imam Besar) in 1959, the same year that Egypt's Al-Azhar University accorded him an honorary degree, as it had done to his father, Haji Rasul, in 1926. ("I was reminded," he said, "that I hadn't graduated from even the lowest school." The year before he had been named professor of Sufism at the State Islamic Institute in Yogyakarta, and he now began signing himself Prof. Dr. Hamka.[11]) The following year during an official visit to Indonesia, the rector of Al-Azhar University himself, Mahmud Shaltut, suggested that Hamka's new mosque in Kebayoran Baru be called Masjid Agung al-Azhar in light of its important role in Indonesia and in recognition of its distinguished *imam*.[12]

For Hamka, the role of *imam* was a new one. It reflected his disaffection with the wayward drift of Indonesian life and his growing alarm for Islam in a society that harbored bitter foes, especially the surging Communists. Masjumi was in disgrace. The constitutional assembly had failed. Sukarno was now a dictator, in Hamka's view. The real battleground in the country's looming culture wars was not strictly the field of politics. It was society at large. To survive and prevail, Muslims themselves needed to be more knowledgeable, more committed, and more resilient. Under his leadership, the Al-Azhar Mosque would become a fount of Muslim revival, a vibrant center for *dakwah* (propagation of the faith).[13] "All this time," Hamka told his son Rusydi, "we've neglected the mosque because we've been too busy in parliament." Now, "we'll take up our struggle from the mosque."[14]

Early in his tenure as *imam*, Hamka began offering lessons on the Qur'an in the early morning following the dawn *subuh* prayers. His *subuh* lectures became immensely popular, and he soon added additional classes: Monday night lessons on Sufism; Wednesday afternoon lessons for housewives; Wednesday night lessons for Western-educated participants; plus additional lessons every Sunday morning.[15] On Fridays people flocked to hear his sermons. At Hamka's encouragement, the mosque launched a kindergarten and eventually a full school and other public services. Its meeting rooms welcomed Muslim youth groups; Hamka fostered their leaders and encouraged them to make the mosque their home away from home.[16] The congregation grew and grew, and Masjid Agung al-Azhar—with its white onion dome rising above the rooftops of Kebayoran Baru and Hamka in the pulpit—quickly became a bastion of the capital's beleaguered Muslims, especially those with ties to Masjumi and Muhammadiyah.[17]

Based at the mosque, Hamka now launched a new magazine in order to bring back the vigor of public writing about Islam characteristic of the late Dutch period. These days, he wrote, mainstream Indonesian journalism openly questions "the oneness of God or, at the very least, steers the opinions of the masses toward thoroughly material concerns."[18] In combating this trend, *Panji Masyarakat* (Society's banner) would call upon the dynamic ideas of Muslim reform that began with Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh and their Indonesian followers and it would "step to the forefront in the struggle of modern Islam against the dangerous assaults of materialism and atheism."[19]

Hamka consciously modeled his new magazine on *Society's Compass* of his prewar Medan days.[20] He filled it with familiar features on Muslim history, philosophy, current events in the global *umma*, plus advice columns and other popular features.[21] The magazine began with a circulation of ten thousand and within a year shot up to fifteen thousand and eventually to twenty thousand—a number that might have been higher were it not for the strict rationing of paper.[22] It circulated via more than one hundred agents throughout the country, with particularly strong followings in Java, Sumatra, Sulawesi, and Kalimantan.[23] Hamka's contributors included Indonesia's leading modernist journalists and intellectuals, but the true voice of *Society's Banner* was unquestionably his.[24]

In introducing the first issue, Hamka reiterated for his readers the fundamental ideas of reform Islam: that the Qur'an and Hadith represent God's revelation and that although the revelation of the Qur'an is constant and perfect, people's understanding of it requires constant renewal and reform "so that we are not left behind"; that *akal* (intellect) is God's gift to humans as a tool for renewal and reform; that *taklid* (blind obedience) is the enemy of renewal and

reform; and that modern knowledge (and, conspicuously, Western knowledge) is its ally, so long as Muslims apply it critically. This, he wrote, is the "Muslim spirit" that the magazine embraces.[25] Repeatedly in subsequent issues he exclaimed in capital letters the magazine's mission: "To propagate culture and knowledge in the struggle to reform and modernize Islam."[26] Even so, Hamka hastened to add that *Society's Banner* did not speak for just one Muslim party or organization but embraced them all, including, explicitly, Nahdlatul Ulama.[27]

Our national culture, he wrote in the sixteenth issue of *Society's Banner*, is made up of many strands. There is the strand of ancient Hindu-Buddhist civilization. There is the strand of Christianity, with its missionaries and schools. And there is the Western strand, which includes materialism and even atheism. Today, each one is competing for space—a "place to plant its seeds"—in Indonesian culture. Indeed, each one in its own way "is enriching our people's personality."[28] But if these other strands of Indonesian culture are entitled to exist, so, too, is Islam entitled to exist, all the more so as the dominant strand of our national culture. These days, he wrote, Muslim culture in Indonesia is often stigmatized as "Arab culture," as though that were something alien. We could just as easily stigmatize Western culture or Christian culture as "Dutch" or "American," or, in the case of Communism, "Russian" culture.

When people say "Arab culture," he said, they really mean Muslim civilization, meaning the civilization that developed in Arabia, Persia, India, and Spain and also in Indonesia "due to the influence of the Muslim view of life."[29] In Indonesia it took only two centuries for Islam to almost wholly overwhelm twelve centuries of Hindu-Buddhist influence. Today, officially, there are only two million Hindus in Indonesia. Likewise, European colonization and Christian proselytizing began some four hundred years ago, yet today, he wrote, there are fewer than five million Christians. Contrast this to our country's one hundred million Muslims. Even though many of these people are only nominal Muslims, Islam still has by far the largest number of Indonesian adherents. Muslim culture has been shaping Indonesian culture for centuries. It "has a right to exist in this country" and "to continue to fill the national culture." We are in the midst of a great "cultural struggle," he said. "Why should we grovel and be still and not wave our banners too?"[30]

Hamka called his readers' attention to an alarming trend. Too many people tended to blur the lines between Communism and Islam. Sukarno's political embrace of the Communists and his integrationist oratory suggesting that nationalism, religion, and Communism formed a coherent three-in-one ideology (soon to be codified as Nasakom, or Nasionalisme, Agama, Kommunisme) conveyed this kind of thinking, Hamka observed. These days one heard about

"progressive *kyai*s" and "nonfanatic *ulama*s" who collaborated happily with Communists or who claimed to be Communists themselves. These same *ulama*s were clever at selecting passages from the Qur'an and the Hadith to show that Communism and Islam are compatible. As Hamka had frequently written in the past, this was superficially true, especially in the arenas of social justice and anticolonialism. But just as rambutan and mango trees are superficially similar (they have branches and leaves and bear fruit), they are also utterly different "from the roots up."[31] So are Islam and Communism. Now that the influence of the Communists is rising, it is important not to blur these lines. Too much ideological "compatibility," he wrote, will make it harder for people to discern between "right and wrong . . . belief and nonbelief . . . and consensus and dictatorship."[32]

In the early 1960s Indonesia's political crisis deepened further when Sukarno disbanded the elected parliament—all that remained of the country's pre-Guided Democracy structure—and replaced it with one of his own choosing. The new mutual-cooperation parliament included no members from Masjumi or its allies.[33] Bending to the wind, the country's other major Muslim party, the tradition-oriented Nahdlatul Ulama, joined Sukarno's new grouping enthusiastically alongside the PNI, several functional groups, and some forty appointed Communists or PKI members.[34] Finding themselves ever more isolated, some Masjumi leaders now launched the Democratic League to protest Guided Democracy's dictatorial trajectory. Catholic, Protestant, and secularist leaders joined the effort alongside some army officers and a small party with which army chief Abdul Haris Nasution himself was affiliated.[35] The league's most prominent supporter, however, was Mohammad Hatta, Indonesia's founding vice president, who had resigned in 1956. Although Hamka had consciously designed *Society's Banner* to fight the cultural struggle and not the political one, in May 1960 he opened the pages of his influential magazine to this revered figure of Indonesia's independence movement.[36]

In his article "Our Democracy," Hatta argued that Indonesia's slide into dictatorship illustrated an "iron law of world history."[37] It is the inevitable result, he said, of abandoning the country's initial strong-executive constitution of 1945 in favor of the strong-parliament constitution of 1950. Indonesia's immature body politic was not ready for such an "ultrademocratic" system, which resulted in twenty-eight feuding parties by the 1955 elections and which rendered the founding duumvirate of Sukarno-Hatta impotent symbols. In such a free-for-all, the parties naturally maneuvered to advance their own interests, not those of the state. "Corruption and demoralization ran wild," Hatta wrote.[38] It is not surprising that none of the coalition governments of the period succeeded in

governing well. Nor is it surprising that in the face of potential anarchy, Sukarno seized power for himself in a dictatorship disguised as democracy, or "masquerade democracy."[39] His actions amounted to a coup d'état, wrote Hatta. But Indonesian democracy was not dead, he said, only in crisis. It had deep roots in the country's village culture and also in the independence movement. When the dictatorship has passed, democracy will rise again. The Democratic League was a pioneer in paving the way for the restoration of a "healthy Indonesian democracy." "Insja Allah [God willing]," he concluded, our "sleeping democracy will awaken again."[40]

Hatta's plea struck a chord. The *Banner*'s circulation surged after it appeared, and Hamka and his collaborators quickly republished the essay as a brochure. They dreamed of expansion, with magazines for women and children and with a new list of books by Hamka and others.[41] But Hatta's essay infuriated Sukarno, who in August banned Masjumi altogether and subsequently also closed down *Society's Banner*—at first by pinching its paper supply and ultimately by banning it altogether.[42] Also eliminated in this sweep were two other modernist-oriented publications, Rosihan Anwar's *Pedoman* and Masjumi's *Abadi*, and the Sukarno-defying *Indonesia Raya*, led by Mochtar Lubis.[43] As Sukarno closed publications with contrary points of view, the influence of official news outlets and Communist-linked papers grew.[44] In the face of these disturbing shifts, Hamka devoted himself ever more actively to his new mosque and its blossoming congregation.

Culture Wars: Friends and Enemies

Sukarno may well have been a dictator, as both Hatta and Hamka described him, but he was a dictator whose true powers were limited by the need to nourish and reward those who supported him as he moved quixotically into the murky waters of Guided Democracy, with its highly personalized Sukarno-esque ideology on the surface and a highly unstable platform of competing power bases just beneath it. These power bases included traditionalist Muslims organized under Nahdlatul Ulama and Sukarno's following in the PNI. But looming more significantly in this liminal period were two rival institutions whose power was on the rise, the army and the Indonesian Communist Party.

The army had had a troubled relationship with the Indonesian state from the beginning. Some of its restive officers had actually challenged parliament in an unsuccessful show of force in 1952.[45] In subsequent years, the failures of the young country's parliamentary system convinced many in the army leadership

that a stronger hand at the top was needed.[46] The army's mythic role in the revolution and its success under Abdul Haris Nasution in quelling CIA-assisted regional rebellions and shoring up the nation's center gave the institution added authority. And its wide role in managing former Dutch-owned plantations and other enterprises gave it considerable financial resources. A divisive cleavage in its senior leadership was breached in 1955 and, although factions remained, Nasution emerged as chief of staff. Nasution supported Sukarno's Guided Democracy putsch and advocated for a legitimate role for the military not only in the nation's defense but in its governance. As Harold Crouch writes, the army came to see itself as "the guardian of the national interest with responsibility to intervene in political affairs whenever the weakness of civilian government made it necessary."[47] The army was among the "functional groups" included in Sukarno's appointed mutual cooperation parliament and by 1960 an essential foundation for his postparliamentary regime.[48]

Like the army, the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) waxed strong during the troubled 1950s, scoring big gains in the 1955 national elections and growing in membership and influence thereafter. By 1956 its official party newspaper, *Harian Rakjat*—predictably, the *People's Daily*—was the largest of any party and, according to Ricklefs, it "was also the wealthier of the parties, with income from membership dues, . . . fundraising campaigns and other sources." Its influence, moreover, reached deep into the countryside, especially in Java, where its teams "repaired bridges, schools, houses, dams, public lavatories, drains and roads, . . . eradicated pests and set up literacy courses, organized village sports and musical groups, and offered members support in times of hardship."[49] Under Aidit, the party had settled upon a strategy of seeking power peacefully on the basis of an enormous mass membership.[50] By the early 1960s, with 1.5 to 2 million members, it was the largest such party in the world.[51] Affiliated mass organizations of peasants, workers, students, and artists added millions more to its following.[52]

In its propaganda, the PKI stigmatized the modernist Muslims of Muhammadiyah and Masjumi not as religious enemies but as class enemies—namely, as exemplars of the "comprador bourgeoisie." This formulation allowed it to differentiate unfriendly members of the bourgeoisie from the friendly ones of the "national bourgeoisie," meaning those loyal to Sukarno and willing to ally themselves (or to tolerate) the Communists. Masjumi's association through its leaders with the anti-Sukarno rebellions of 1958 yielded evidence that the party was antinational and pro-Western, in part because regional grievances over the proceeds from commodity exports underlay the rebellions, and in part because the rebellions had been supported by the United States. Some Masjumi leaders had also been implicated in the "antinational" Darul Islam movement.

More broadly, the PKI depicted Masjumi's modernist followers as bureaucratic capitalists, predatory moneylenders, and "evil landlords."[53] As Rex Mortimer points out, the party's application of political categories—national versus comprador bourgeoisie, Left-middle-Right—was "so flexible that it could be given almost any meaning required in a specific political context."[54] The PKI's stigmatizing characterizations of Masjumi obfuscated a more fundamental reason for the party's harsh attacks on the modernists: as staunch anti-Communists with a vast national constituency, Masjumi represented a powerful threat to the ambitious Communists. Its followers were the party's most "hated and feared political opponents."[55] When Sukarno banned the Masjumi and the much smaller Indonesian Socialist Party (PSI) in 1960, Aidit applauded but added: "What is even more important is to destroy the source of these parties, to destroy their social basis."[56]

In the absence of elections, the Communist Party found in Sukarno a willing ally in advancing its membership and influence. In return, the Communists became an increasingly indispensable source of support for the charismatic president—alongside their other "hated and feared opponent," the Indonesian army. It was Sukarno's mortal dilemma to nourish his dependent alliances with both of these competing entities and to keep them from destroying each other.[57]

The power struggle that now ensued was disciplined by no clear procedures or rules. Sukarno occupied the center but was far from all-powerful. Beneath and around him the army and the Communists maneuvered to advance at each other's expense. Within each grouping—among Sukarno's party members and his allies in the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), for example, and within the armed forces—were people with mixed political convictions and divided loyalties. Meanwhile, on the fringes of power, members of the banned Masjumi and Muhammadiyah-affiliated modernists groped for agency in the netherworld that Robert W. Hefner has called the "new politics of secrecy and underground alliances."[58] Working furtively, they "forged secret alliances with other anti-communist politicians, including people from the PSI, Christian party, NU, conservative nationalists, and sympathetic members of the armed forces."[59] In this anxious atmosphere, Hamka's mosque became the informal headquarters for anti-Communist Muslims to gather, pray, and strategize. Hasan Basri described it as "the last fort against PKI pressure, the only free place."[60]

And so it was that among those who now became regulars at the Al-Azhar Mosque in the Jakarta suburbs were Brigadier General Sudirman, commander of the army's staff college in Bandung, and Lieutenant Colonel Muchlas Rowi, the army's senior Muslim chaplain.[61] Hamka's son Rusydi tells us that Sudirman and Rowi became quite close to his father and often came to the

house to discuss "the fate of the Muslim community under a regime strongly influenced by the Communists."[62] Sudirman advanced the idea of establishing an Islamic library at Al-Azhar Mosque, and a foundation was soon established for that purpose with certain senior Sukarno regime figures as members, including armed forces chief of staff and minister for defense and security Nasution and stalwart Sukarnoist and PNI leader Ruslan Abdulgani.[63] The library opened in February 1961 with an elaborate public ceremony during Ramadan. Nasution and Ruslan Abdulgani were both on hand as Fatmawati Sukarno, one of the president's wives and officially the first lady, cut the ceremonial ribbon.[64] The meaning of these maneuvers became clearer, says Rusydi, when Ramadan ended and thousands of worshipers led by Hamka gathered at Al-Azhar Mosque to pray and celebrate. On that very public day in 1961, Nasution prayed at Al-Azhar Mosque as Sukarno and his ministers prayed at the presidential palace.[65]

Sometime later that year, Nasution approached Hamka through Sudirman and Rowi about starting a new magazine in the spirit of *Society's Banner*—as Sudirman put it, "to protect the people from the danger of Communism."[66] Nasution himself would provide the start-up money and also act as the new magazine's public patron. Sudirman and Rowi would appear as manager and managing editor; the library foundation would be the publisher. As for Hamka, he would be named only as "helper," despite the fact that, as Rusydi makes clear, the magazine would be "totally in his hands."[67] When the first issue of *Gema Islam* (Islam's echo) appeared in January 1962, the cover displayed the huge, white Al-Azhar Mosque rising above the skyline of Kebayoran Baru. Inside, the hand of the army was explicit. Nasution himself offered a full-page greeting that included his photograph. He reminded readers that Indonesia was founded upon a belief in one Almighty God and that Muslims were obligated to manifest this belief in their lives and to propagate it. "Through this magazine," he wrote, calling upon images of the hallowed revolution, "I urge the Muslims of Indonesia to prepare themselves for a general mobilization . . . like the one [we] carried out when we faced the Dutch from 1945 to 1949."[68]

Although the "general mobilization" of which the general spoke invokes the rising tide of Communism, the magazine's inaugural issue is not polemical. Instead, it is devoted—as its motto suggests it will be—to "Muslim knowledge and culture" (Pengetahuan dan Kebudajaan Islam). In one essay, Mohammad Roem examines the problem of "church and state" in the United States and contrasts it with the Muslim ideal, in which Muslim teachings guide people in all aspects of life, including "national and international affairs."[69] In another, Rusydi Hamka writes of *Al-Munir*, Indonesia's first modernist newspaper,

whose aims were strikingly similar to *Islam's Echo*.[70] Another addresses the concept of monotheism in Islam and its kindred but difficult relationship to Judaism, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism. There is a short story and a play. Hamka himself writes about how he has begun to record his early-morning Qur'an lessons at Al-Azhar Mosque for publication and—his new project—to write a multivolume commentary on the Qur'an, or *tafsir*. Writing as Abu Zaki, a pen name from his Medan days, he also contributes a poem in celebration of Rusydi's upcoming wedding. Calling again on his favorite metaphor, he depicts the couple casting off into uncertain waters in a small boat.[71]

Many pages in the inaugural issue, however, are devoted to defending Muslim culture against those "groups who are unhappy to see Islam advancing in our country" and "who ridicule the Muslim community."[72] Just a month before, Muslim activists, intellectuals, and *ulama*s had gathered for a national meeting to commit themselves to create and promote art "in the spirit of Islam."[73] Hamka's keynote address to the gathering (reprinted in the inaugural issue) placed the current crisis within the large themes of his Great Story. Islam is deeply rooted among us, he said, and has been shaped in Indonesia by its interactions with the country's unique characteristics. It is authentically Indonesian. Today, Islam stands between two competing civilizations. The first is Hindu-Buddhism, the powerful residual elements of which still appeal to many Indonesians, especially in Java. The second is the surging and irresistible influence of the modern West. These days, he said, "the entire Muslim world, from Morocco to Merauke, from the palaces of kings to the huts of simple farmers, from the environs of the Haram Mosque itself—where pilgrims who have just performed the *thawaf* [the circumambulation of the Ka'ba] look for Coca-Cola to drink before drinking Zamzam water—to my house and to your house, has been flooded with Western culture."[74]

As he had so often written, Hamka again reminded his listeners and readers that the West has much to teach us but that unmindful borrowing will lead to the headlong materialism that now torments Western life, from the disgraceful behavior of Western women and their "you-can-see" clothing to the horrors of the atom bomb.[75] We must be careful what we borrow! These days we face new challenges from the West, including a Christian culture that is expanding in Asia and the militant assaults of the extreme Left and its doctrine of not believing in God. Leading this movement in Indonesia are the Communists and their cultural organization, Lekra, who assert that "if you don't become a Communist or embrace its doctrines . . . you are not the People."[76] It's no wonder that cultural movements including our own that oppose this are sprouting all over Indonesia. And what is it that we stand for in these culture wars? It's not "art as

art," nor art that "conveys polytheism or that arouses sexual passion and lust." No, it's "art that seeks truth."[77]

Islam's Echo, its readers, and Hamka himself all entered the fray with the powerful backing of General Nasution and other leading military officers. As they did so, they conspicuously broadcast their loyalty to Sukarno's government, whatever their private anxieties may have been. In bold print on page 1 of Hamka's new magazine, its founders declared their support for Sukarno's campaign to "liberate" western New Guinea from the Dutch and to "reunite" it with Indonesia—a campaign vociferously supported by the Communists as well.[78] This display of patriotism was tactical, to be sure, but it also reflected Hamka's lifelong effort to place the story of Indonesia within the larger story of Islam.

What happened next was sobering. Early in the morning of the day following the first appearance of *Islam's Echo*, Sukarno's government arrested Mohammad Roem, M. Yunan Nasution, Prawoto Mankusasmito, and other Masjumi leaders who were part of Hamka's circle of confidants, along with Socialist Party leaders Sutan Sjahrir and Anak Agung Gde Agung. Mohammad Natsir had already been detained.[79] These were high-profile political arrests. Sjahrir and Natsir had both been prime ministers. Roem and Prawoto had been vice premiers.[80] Hamka rushed to his military friends for an explanation. They were at a loss. "We are also waiting to see what will happen," said his contact Fakih Usman, General Nasution's go-between.[81] Fakih Usman warned Hamka that although this first round of arrests targeted party leaders, his turn would come.[82]

Hamka busied himself with the magazine and the burgeoning *dakwah* movement he had launched at Al-Azhar Mosque. Indeed, in these troubled times, attendance at the mosque for Hamka's lessons and Friday prayers swelled with new congregants and anxious national leaders. On two occasions, the mosque was threatened with bombs.[83] In August 1962, for the celebration of Muhammad's birthday, he arranged to visit his friends in jail and delivered a sermon on Ibn Taymiya, the great scholar of Damascus imprisoned for his convictions.[84] It wasn't until September that he learned what was in store for him.

Under Attack

Hamka's *The Sinking of the* van der Wijck, according to C. W. Watson, was "arguably the most popular romantic novel of the 1930s and 1940s" in Indonesia. By 1962 it was in its eighth printing.[85] On September 7 the left-leaning

newspaper *Bintang Timur* (Star of the east) published the accusation that Hamka had plagiarized this famous book. The author, one Abdullah S. P., began by admitting that as a youth he had been a great fan of Hamka, "mesmerized" and "moved to tears" by stories like *The Sinking*. Later, he writes, he discovered the Egyptian writer Musthafa Luthfi al-Manfaluthi, and it was then that he observed the similarities between al-Manfaluthi's *Magdalena* and Hamka's *The Sinking*—all the more so when he saw an Egyptian film of the story. Hamka, he finally concluded, was a blatant plagiarist.[86] Abdullah's article was accompanied by an "idea script" showing how closely the plot of Hamka's novel followed the plot of Manfaluthi's, which was itself an Arabic translation of a nineteenth-century French novel by Alphonse Karr, *Sous les tilleuls* (Beneath the linden trees).[87] Yet another article depicted "our Hamka"—"who doesn't recognize his famous name?"—presiding over a public seminar making lame jokes, plugging his books, and attributing to himself a well-known story of Socrates.[88]

Bintang Timur's public attack brought into the open a fact that had been discussed quietly for years among Indonesia's Muslim intelligentsia. To the masses of his readers and followers, Hamka was a great authority. But among the highly literate few, it was an open secret that some of Hamka's oeuvre was based upon books and articles by others. Stories to this effect had long circulated in Jakarta.[89] As we have noted, Hamka read voraciously in the contemporary Arabic-language literature on Islam and rendered what he learned into his own highly readable Indonesian. In doing so, he moved new knowledge and new stories into the discourse of Indonesia, placing his own distinctive stamp on the result. Recall how he said of Egypt's Ahmad Amin: "his pen often guided my pen."[90] This was a time-honored tradition of cultural transmission in the Muslim world and, before modern codes of authorship took hold, virtually everywhere.[91]

But times were changing. The vast majority of Indonesia's rising intelligentsia was Western educated, writers for whom protocols of authorship were stricter. Hamka was not utterly unaware of this. Even in his *Society's Compass* days he often acknowledged the sources of his articles. But as a self-educated man, his approach to appropriation was undisciplined and careless, as he openly admitted.[92]

Only a year before *Bintang Timur* made its spectacular charges, one of Hamka's young admirers warned him in a letter that he was vulnerable on this front. He urged Hamka to acknowledge his sources more explicitly, lest his reputation be belittled after his death, when he couldn't defend himself. Hamka responded by saying that these sorts of accusations had dogged him for

years. The people who made them hadn't examined the material carefully. If they had, the most they could say is that the stories in question were *adapted*, not copied. *The Sinking of the* van der Wijck, he said, is an adaptation. The plot was taken from a book by Musthafa Luthfi al-Manfaluthi and "given an Indonesian spirit."[93] The same is true of other books in which he drew heavily upon Arabic sources but added his own ideas.[94] To write something like his four-volume *History of Islam*, Hamka said, one has to read "dozens of books and not copy just one."[95] If he was ever accused publicly, he said, he wouldn't pretend to be a lawyer and defend himself. Let "an honest scholarly commission" decide.[96]

Pramoedya Ananta Toer edited *Bintang Timur*'s literary page, called Lentera, which came out every Friday. Pramoedya was then thirty-seven years old and a gifted fiction writer who embraced the revolutionary message of Indonesia's Communists, although he did not embrace the party itself. As a leading left-wing intellectual, he promoted "socialist realism" in literature and vented against what he viewed as the religio-sentimentality of books like Hamka's. By the early 1960s Pramoedya was an influential culture warrior on the side of the Left. His name on the masthead of *Bintang Timur*'s literary page gave it a certain pugnacious authority. Its accusations against Hamka generated a national scandal.[97]

Week after week in the fall of 1962, *Bintang Timur* kept up the attack, including a cartoon-style "idea strip" illustrating again the *Magdalena/Sinking* plot similarities, a mocking cartoon reminding people of Hamka's close ties to the Japanese during the war, and a biting satire titled "Affam" that depicted him as a hypocritical, self-promoting, nonsense-spouting *ulama*—reprinted from a Jakarta literary magazine from 1955. As his literary page heaped on the ridicule, Pramoedya himself, in an interview with the magazine *Berita Minggu* (News of the week), said that "as an admirer of Hamka, I am most extremely disappointed at the exposure of *The Sinking of the* van de Wijck's falseness." Hamka, he said, should apologize.[98]

But he didn't. Instead, as his son Rusydi and other allies rose to his defense in *Islam's Echo* and elsewhere, Hamka said little aside from acknowledging that he had been "strongly influenced by Manfaluthi."[99] Three weeks passed before he issued a reply in which he defiantly declared, "I will not be destroyed by [the] accusations." He declared them "obscenities" and "rubbish." The only people who will believe them, he said, were "those who are already hostile to me." As for plagiarism and related literary violations, let a panel of scholars from the University of Indonesia investigate whether his book "is the product of theft or adaptation or is original."[100]

The scandal surrounding *The Sinking of the* van der Wijck led to a serious public discussion of what plagiarism is exactly and how it differs from other forms of literary borrowing such as translation, adaptation, and inspiration.[101] Similarities between Manfaluthi's story and Hamka's were obvious. The *Bintang Timur* "idea strip" identified sixteen plot similarities. But did they amount to plagiarism?

Indonesia's reigning literary authority at the time was Hans Bague Jassin. Jassin's literary magazines and books promoted literary writing with a passion. For many Indonesian literati, Jassin spoke with canonical authority. He was "the pope" of Indonesian literature (although in Lekra circles this was now said derisively).[102] Jassin was an adjunct professor at the University of Indonesia and chair of the modern Indonesian literature section of Indonesia's Lembaga Bahasa dan Kesusasteraan (Language and Culture Institute). Personally, Jassin was a devout Muslim, but he also believed fiercely in freedom of expression. Indeed, the satirical portrait of Hamka titled "Affam" had originally appeared in one of his own magazines.[103] To answer the awkward question concerning Hamka's famous book, people naturally turned to him. Was *The Sinking of the* van der Wijck plagiarized, they asked him.

It was not, he answered.

In interviews and eventually in an extended essay, Jassin described a spectrum of possibilities, from plagiarism to adaptation to original creation. The first, he explained, is an unacknowledged virtually word-for-word copy or translation of an original work; the second involves transposing an original story to a different time and place and assigning the characters place-specific names but otherwise replicating the themes, characters, and plot of the original. In *The Sinking of the* van der Wijck, he said, Hamka has done much more than this. It's true, "there are similarities of plot and there are ideas and concepts that remind one of *Magdalena*," but *The Sinking* contains modes of expression, personal experiences, sets of complications, and a view of the world that are very much its own—indeed, they are distinctively Hamka's.[104] Jassin points out how much of *The Sinking* is in fact autobiographical, how much of it dwells on the ins and outs of the Minangkabau customs that vexed Hamka's life and the lives of so many of his characters. Jassin emphasizes the central role of Islam in Hamka's book and the story's setting in modern Indonesian society (Hamka's storyscape) and the modernist social criticisms that Hamka embedded within it—the secular citified ways that seduce Hayati, for example. Finally, Jassin asserts that Zainuddin, Hayati, Aziz, and the other characters in *The Sinking* are utterly Indonesian in speech, dress, and affect, as is the book itself as a whole. *The Sinking of the* van der Wijck, he concludes, is Hamka's "own creation."[105]

Jassin arranged for a colleague of his at the University of Indonesia, A. S. Alatas, to translate Manfaluthi's *Madjdulin* into Indonesian so that readers could judge for themselves. Hamka provided his own copy of the book for the translation, and it was published in May 1963 with Jassin's robust defense of Hamka as a foreword. This seemed to quiet the waters. No formal panel was ever formed. For many, Jassin was authority enough—although not for *Bintang Timur* and its allies, which continued to roil the waters periodically, repeating the accusations against Hamka and vilifying Jassin, too.[106] Pramoedya said, "Damn that Jassin. We had inflated the balloon to the fullest so that it was large and ready to burst, and suddenly along comes Jassin and punctures it with a needle . . . [so that] instead of exploding with a bang, it merely hissed."[107]

Hamka was clearly bruised by this public humiliation, but he did not take the bait. The people who are hoping I will return the attack, he said, "can wait in vain because I'm not going to retaliate."[108] He understood that the underlying causes of the attack were political and stemmed from his authority as a prominent Muslim leader. About this time, Hamka was working on a new edition of *My Father*. In revising the dramatic passage about Haji Rasul's face-off with his Communist-influenced students in the 1920s, Hamka added a few lines that reflected his own recent experiences. At that time, he wrote, people "had not yet experienced the Communist system for bringing down their opponents." The hateful, contemptuous, public accusations hurled against Haji Rasul, he wrote, "were tools of the Communists to destroy his very considerable influence."[109] Hamka naturally interpreted the assaults on his own reputation similarly, as a tactic of the Indonesian Communists and their allies in the ever-more-intense culture wars of the times. Left-wing publications now identified the Al-Azhar Mosque as a "neo-Masjumi" center led by Hamka.[110] Pramoedya himself alluded to Hamka's influence when he reckoned that Hamka was being read by some "three million admirers."[111]

As the scandal subsided, Hamka worked feverishly to promote the revivalist *dakwah* movement in an atmosphere of growing threat. At the mosque, worshipers and staff members became wary of government spies, as Communist-affiliated intellectual and youth groups sought aggressively to weaken Islam-linked organizations such as the Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (Muslim Students' Association, HMI).

As the Communists surged in complicity with Sukarno's own party, Hamka and his camp continued to look to the army, and to Nasution in particular, to protect their interests—despite Nasution's failure to protect Roem, Yunan Nasution, Sjahrir, and other recent political prisoners.[112] One manifestation of these strategic ties was training courses for Muslim military chaplains offered

regularly at the mosque under Colonel Rowi.[113] Another was the magazine itself. The mid-January 1963 anniversary issue, for example, features a huge portrait of a bemedaled A. H. Nasution on the cover. Inside, the editors thank the general for his "substantial moral and material support toward the publication of *Islam's Echo* from the beginning."[114] The same issue features sidebars in which Nasution is depicted conspicuously as a good Muslim. In one, he answers the question "Who was the most important person in history?" by saying, "Muhammad." In another, he ascertains the geographic direction of Mecca from Australia so that he can pray properly during an official visit there.[115] These banal anecdotes remind readers that Nasution, the country's highest-ranking military officer, is "one of us." The magazine also carries Nasution's essay advocating participation by the armed forces in "nation building" at the grass roots, namely, through army-led "civic missions" in the villages—the selfsame villages in which the PKI was rapidly gaining ground.[116]

With the country's larger power struggle in mind, Hamka and the magazine's backers also featured Sukarno himself whenever they could. The first-anniversary issue quotes the president saying, "Let us try to seize the fire of Islam" and features a photograph of his wife, Fatmawati, during a recent visit to Al-Azhar Mosque.[117] In March Sukarno received a cover portrait of his own, along with a summary of his recent speech on the revelation of the Qur'an. (Message to readers: he is also "one of us.")[118] Later in the year, the magazine provided full-throated support for Sukarno's "anticolonial" confrontation with newly created Malaysia.[119] Editorially, it conspicuously shaped its message of propagating Islam in terms of nation building and the Sukarnoesque formulation of "completing the revolution of the Indonesian people."[120]

Sukarno was now "president for life," and it was dangerous to cross him. Moreover, Hamka clung to the hope that Sukarno's identity as a Muslim would steer him in the right direction, which was perhaps the reason Hamka grasped at any opportunity to showcase Sukarno's Muslimness. (In June Sukarno is seen helping design a new mosque in Ambon.)[121] But the facts suggested otherwise. Sukarno was fostering the Communists, and they were surging ahead, or so it seemed. Among other things, local PKI branches were now engaged in "unilateral actions" to seize land from large and middle landowners in many parts of Java and in Bali and North Sumatra, leading to "brawls, burnings, kidnappings, and killings" as Communist versus anti-Communist violence grew.[122] The underlying message of *Islam's Echo* in 1963 was loud and clear: we are losing ground!

Colonel H. A. J. Bustami, governor of South Kalimantan, dramatized this point. He predicted in June that if things continued as they were now, Islam

would disappear from Indonesia in fifty years. The press picked up Bustami's alarming prediction, and it eventually became the basis of a series of articles by R. Moh. Ali in *Islam's Echo*. Without embracing Bustami's time line, Moh. Ali agreed that Islam's survival in Indonesia was "a matter of life or death." This was the bitter reality. Islam, he said, had been the driving force in Indonesia's successful anticolonial struggle and in shaping the new nation. But it had failed to infuse the society thoroughly with its true spirit and values. Indonesian Muslims, he said, remained superficial Muslims who prayed and fasted and were circumcised on schedule and who followed the Muslim rules of marriage and divorce, but they were unequipped to apply Muslim teachings to their difficult and ever-changing day-to-day lives. Adrift in a life of economic hardship and political uncertainty, they were vulnerable to other religions and ideologies and to the seductions of astrologers, charm sellers, magic cults, and a host of flourishing heresies. Obviously, Islam had failed to make itself relevant to the very circumstances of contemporary life. Meanwhile, other religions and ideologies were successfully doing so.[123]

Moh. Ali describes Indonesia of the 1960s as thoroughly embroiled in a culture war in which Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Communism, and a host of sects were competing for attention amid a "flood of new ideas" and life possibilities arriving from the West. Of all these forces, wrote Ali, two posed the greatest threat to Islam. The first was Catholicism. Unlike Islam, Catholicism possessed a single, united, global organization that was capable of providing both spiritual and material support and assistance across a spectrum of churches, hospitals, social welfare organizations, political parties, and schools at every level. To the disturbing anxieties of contemporary life, he said, the Roman Catholic Church offered a "total solution." Communism was similar. It offered an enticing vision of "a new society free from disparity," a single-minded goal to which one might dedicate one's life. This appealed to people who felt rootless and uncertain. Like the Catholic Church, the Communist Party in Indonesia possessed a unified leadership and a disciplined, militant organization. Qualitatively speaking, nothing could match it.[124]

Among those quick to agree was Mukti Ali, a young Muhammadiyah intellectual on the rise with a master's degree from McGill University. In *Islam's Echo*, Mukti Ali lamented the failure of Indonesian Muslims to unite on common ground and noted the remarkable recovery of the Communists following their failed putsch in 1948. In just six or seven years, he wrote, they achieved a huge percentage of votes in the 1955 elections and were now growing by leaps and bounds. This growth is because they have, first, leaders who can lead; second, a clear animating idea that can be understood by their followers; and third,

a militant, disciplined party capable of advancing those ideas. If we cannot achieve the same, and quickly, "then, believe me, we Muslims will be rolled over by the PKI."[125]

In his own question-and-answer columns, Hamka drew a line in the sand. Communists are atheists. There may be some who still pray and fast, but they are "not good Communists or not yet mature enough to be called Communists." Communists may also pray and fast to trick wavering Muslims into thinking that Communism isn't atheist. Don't be fooled, he advised. People must choose one or the other, "true Islam or true Communism."[126]

The plagiarism attacks by Lekra embarrassed Hamka but do not appear to have undermined his authority as a spiritual leader and discourse shaper for Indonesia's modernist Muslims. The circulation of *Islam's Echo* now surged to thirty thousand copies each printing.[127] Among those intriguing around Sukarno there continued to be those who feared Hamka's public influence. In January 1964 they acted.

We have an account in Hamka's own words. "On Monday the 27th of January 1964," he said, "around eleven o'clock in the morning—after I had finished instructing the women at the Al-Azhar Mosque—four policemen from the Department of the Police came and apprehended me, armed with a temporary detention order alleging that I had committed crimes in connection with Presidential Decree No. 11, 1963."[128] (This decree permitted the detention of persons suspected or accused of subversion.) By the end of the day, Hamka had been placed in a police bungalow in the mountains of Bogor, some 115 kilometers south of Jakarta. Again, General Nasution could do nothing. Hamka would not be free again for almost two and a half years.[129]

Four days passed before his interrogation began and he learned that he was accused of conspiring with Malaysia to overthrow the Indonesian government and to assassinate President Sukarno. Specifically, he was accused of attending a certain secret meeting in Tangerang on October 11; of receiving a letter and four million in money from Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia's founding prime minister; of hosting another secret meeting in his own house; and of fomenting subversive ideas in public meetings in Pontianak, Kalimantan, and Jakarta.[130]

The first weeks of Hamka's detention coincided with the final days of Ramadan. The authorities did not report his arrest, but whispers of it soon swept through the Al-Azhar Mosque community and among the politicized classes. When Sukarno-regime insider Ruslan Abdulgani, and not Hamka, rose to give the *khutbah* at the mosque on Idul Fitri, the great day of celebration marking the end of the fast (and in so doing confirmed the rumors), most of the people rose and walked away in protest.[131]

In his account of these hard days, jotted down in the early months of his detention and passed to his son Fakhri, Hamka admits that he was wholly blindsided by the charges. When he denied everything, police investigators called him a liar and interrogated him exhaustively about his education, his acquaintances and friends, his affiliations, and, eventually, his alleged participation in the plot against Sukarno. What role did you play in the movement? they asked. What was your position? He was given page after page of written questions, most of which he answered, "I don't know." The police interrogators sometimes treated him respectfully, calling him Pak Hamka, and sometimes stripped him to his underwear and hurled insults at him, saying, "[You are] one lying *kyai.*"[132]

"Do you know Zawawi?" they asked him.

"I know him well." (Zawawi was a youth active in Masjumi circles.)

"In your opinion, Saudara Hamka, is Zawawi a good and honest person?"

"As far as I know, he is honest," said Hamka.

"If there were a statement from Zawawi about you yourself, is there a possibility that he would slander you?"

"No!" answered Hamka.

The interrogators then revealed that Zawawi had implicated Hamka in the conspiracy. After this, says Hamka, "I began to be confused."[133]

Later the same day, Hamka learned that Ghazali Sjahlan, his close associate at the Al-Azhar Mosque, had also signed a confession. Interrogator Soedakso told him that Ghazali Sjahlan "hadn't wanted to confess. But now he has confessed . . . [and] he won't be bothered and barraged with questions anymore." Hamka could rest, too, Soedakso said, if only he confessed.[134]

In a humiliating face-to-face confrontation before the interrogators, another acquaintance of Hamka's named Overste Nasuhi also implicated him, going so far as to describe what Hamka had been wearing the night of a certain secret meeting. In a stolen moment later in the day, Hamka challenged him, "Why did you slander me?"

Shifting to Arabic, Nasuhi answered, "All of us have been slandered. . . . These defamations have been made by the Communists to destroy us and to marginalize us from society. I confessed to the false charges after I was tortured. I hear that others of our friends have also been tortured. Because of this, I advise you just to confess."

"What will I confess to? I haven't done anything at all!" he said.

"Just make up a confession," answered Nasuhi. "If the police don't get what they want, they're going to strike you. You are old," he said. "Your body can't take it. . . . Later, before a proper judge, we will reveal why we were forced to confess."[135]

Hamka resisted, but he also weakened. He was exhausted. He broke down and cried and "asked God for strength and guidance."[136] And he began to consider Overste Nasuhi's advice. A police inspector who overheard Hamka's conversation with Nasuhi took him aside and said, "If you find yourself before a judge later, I am prepared to testify that you confessed on the advice of Nasuhi, to avoid torture. I will defend you."[137] In the early-morning hours of February 6, as his interrogators harassed him with yet more threats and insults, Hamka confessed to everything.[138]

He was finally permitted to sleep. But in the following days and weeks, police teams pressed him for a detailed account of his participation in the conspiracy. Hamka persuaded one of the interrogators to read to him Zawawi's confession, and Hamka based his own on Zawawi's, adding details and names that had emerged during his interrogations. Otherwise, he says, he simply made things up—but without naming anyone who was not already implicated: "I remembered that when I was young I wrote novels fluently. Why couldn't I do that now?"[139]

Hamka is clear that he made his false confession to avoid torture. He was encouraged in this tactic, he says, by the police themselves, who spoke openly of his confession as a "strategy" or "ruse."[140] While some of the interrogators bullied him, others approached him confidentially. One offered to slip letters asking for help to President Sukarno, Ruslan Abdul Gani, General Nasution, and others, including K. H. Fakih Usman, head of Muhammadiyah. (Copies of these letters later turned up in the wrong hands.) The same confidant brought Hamka a whispered message from Ghazali Sjahlan, asking his forgiveness for implicating him in the alleged plot after being beaten and tortured with electric shocks.[141] (Writing in his diary in another Sukarno-era detention center, political prisoner Mochtar Lubis commented on Hamka's arrest—which Mochtar learned about from his wife—and on news from the wife of Ghazali Sjahlan that he had been tortured with electric shocks.[142]) Somehow, Hamka's family managed to slip to him his daybook for the past year, which he used to establish his alibi, since, despite his "confession," he was determined to establish his innocence.[143]

Using information from his daybook, Hamka established that he could not have been present at the secret meetings described in the case against him. Readings of his speeches would reveal, he said, that far from opposing Sukarno's confrontation with Malaysia, he supported it. Moreover, he had never encouraged young people to follow the path of subversion or rebellion. The accusation that he had done so was nothing but libel. At the end of March, following more than seven weeks of interrogation, the lead investigator told Hamka privately that he and his team had concluded that the whole affair amounted to nothing.

He apologized for treating Hamka badly and pledged to identify the source of the false accusations.[144] Some of the interrogators now brought him bananas and cigarettes and asked him for spiritual advice.[145]

But these sea changes did not bring an end to the matter. Hamka was still obliged to proceed with his formal confession. Framing his narrative to protect Sjahlan and Nasuhi, he signed three statements implicating himself in the assassination plot and other acts of subversion. These were forwarded to the Supreme Court (he was told). The police commissioner who accompanied him to a new detention site in June told him: "I doubt that you will be brought to trial, because this case amounts to nothing at all! Maybe you will merely be detained for a while. This is a political matter."[146]

And so it was. Hamka was not brought to trial. Indeed, he was never formally charged.

Hamka was now fifty-six years old and a man of many ailments, including diabetes and chronic hemorrhoids. After shifting him among four detention sites in the highlands around Bogor, in August 1964 the authorities moved Hamka to Friendship Hospital on the outskirts of Jakarta, where he remained in police custody for another seventeen months.[147] He was now trapped in the gulag of Sukarno's final years, a world in which even General Nasution as minister for defense and security could not intervene to protect him.[148] *Islam's Echo* did not broach the subject of Hamka's disappearance and continued to list him as a "helper."[149] Meanwhile, Nasution continued to patronize Al-Azhar Mosque. Indeed, as Hamka confronted his accusers in May 1964, the general addressed the gathered throngs at the mosque's annual Idul Adha celebrations. Certain other prominent regime figures contributed sacrificial cattle for the ritual occasion, including President Sukarno himself, his wife, Fatmawati, and air force chief Omar Dhani.[150] These highly symbolic gestures—attempts by various regime figures to foster good relations with the influential Muslim community that gathered at Al-Azhar, even as its *imam* and other leaders languished in detention—were part of the complex calculus of political rivalry now in play in the capital city and surely a matter of much hushed discussion during the occasion.

Unlike other prominent political prisoners of the day, such as Mohammad Roem, Mochtar Lubis, Anak Agung Gde Agung, and M. Yunan Nasution, who were detained as a group and who carried on with many aspects of community life (they played tennis and cooked for each other), Hamka was virtually alone in the hospital.[151] Family members could visit him from time to time, but he was generally without stimulating company. He admits to loneliness and depression. But believing as he did that "the plans of human beings are different

from the mysterious plans of God," he concluded that his incarceration had occurred for a purpose. God "evidently wished for [his] two-year separation from his wife and family and from society so that he could finish the serious work of writing an exegesis of the Holy Qur'an."[152] Now he had all the time in the world and also his precious books of theology, philosophy, and history that the police guards allowed him. He threw himself into a disciplined routine of learning and writing—composing his exegesis, or *tafsir*, in the long mornings; reading in the afternoons; reciting the Qur'an between the twilight and sunset prayers; and devoting his nights to meditation and prayer.[153]

Hamka had begun his *tafsir* in connection with his early-morning Qur'an lessons at the mosque in 1958 and in a series of articles in *Society's Banner* and *Islam's Echo*. But he had not made much headway by January 1964 when he was arrested. He noted afterward that if he had not been arrested for these two-plus years, he would not have finished it "until I died."[154] As it happened, he writes, "a few days before I was moved [from the hospital] to house arrest [in early 1966], all thirty *juz'u* were finished." (Or, as he goes on to admit, not *quite* finished.)[155]

During his long period of incarceration, Hamka consoled himself with the story of Ibn Taymiya (1263–1328), the Hanbali jurist who was jailed for years in Damascus under the Mamluks for his antiestablishment views—as Hamka put it, "Because his soul couldn't be bought"—and whose body was borne from the prison where he died to his gravesite by legions of adoring followers.[156]

Gestapu

Hamka's arrest and long detention rendered him out of play during the wrenching final years of Sukarno's leadership. As the president sought ever more precariously to ride the waves of his country's increasingly uncontrollable power struggle, fostering the army and the Communists simultaneously, Indonesian Muslims sought to position themselves as safely as possible. Nahdlatul Ulama tacked closely to Sukarno's nationalist party and remained in the regime's good graces, even as it found itself in desperate conflict with the Communists at the local level. In East Java, for example, the Communist Party's unilateral "land reforms" often pitted poor sharecroppers, tenants, and wage laborers against NU-affiliated landowners, merchants, and well-to-do *kyais*.[157] With Masjumi utterly marginalized, Muhammadiyah-linked modernists like those affiliated with Hamka's mosque and *Islam's Echo* worked furiously to sustain their communities through *dakwa* and a plethora of socioreligious organizations to rival those of NU and the Communists.[158] They, too, however, had little

choice other than to adhere publicly to Sukarno's personality cult and to his rhetoric. In September 1964, for example, *Islam's Echo* published in full Sukarno's Independence Day speech, called "The Year of Living Dangerously," in which "the Great Leader of the Revolution" exclaimed that "the Indonesian Revolution MUST GO FORWARD."[159]

Meanwhile, the Communist assault on non-Communist writers and intellectuals became more strident. When H. B. Jassin and others responded in 1963 with a cultural manifesto, asserting that art was universal and should not be subordinated to political purposes, Pramoedya Ananta Toer and his Lekra comrades harangued them about their philosophy of "universal humanism" in *Bintang Timur* and other public venues; behind the scenes, the party moved to have the manifesto banned as counterrevolutionary.[160] Jassin's small journal was also banned, and he was forced to resign from his post at the University of Indonesia. In 1964 books by manifesto authors were banned, and, here and there, the police confiscated copies of books by Jassin, Hamka, Mochtar Lubis, and others.[161] Taufiq Ismail, a young student writer affiliated with the manifesto group, later wrote, "Every day I read *Star of the East* [*Bintang Timur*] and felt the terrorism in the campus directed at me. . . . I felt as if I was in a situation where I'd be killed, or kill."[162]

This sense of terror, of imminent danger, was now experienced across the society as the escalating culture wars penetrated every neighborhood. As a Muslim youth in Makassar, Mochtar Pabottingi remembers the city's rival theater groups and drum bands and the bullying and psychological harassment by local Communists, such as the occasion when some local PKI leaders arrived at his home and required the family to dig "a grave-like" hole outside the household walls—"in case of an air attack," they said. Someone whispered to him that he was on the PKI blacklist. There was a sense, he says, that such rivalry could turn to outright fighting at any time.[163]

Underlying the mounting tension were social and economic conditions that drove the rich to fear for their riches and the poor to dream of a miraculous Communist-led rescue from their poverty. Indonesia's population had grown dramatically in the twentieth century, and in Java, population densities had reached five hundred people per square kilometer by the 1960s.[164] Meanwhile, everyone experienced the steady diminution of their earthly estate, no matter how small, as a result of rampant inflation. By mid-1965 prices were doubling almost every week.[165]

In the face of such disorienting realities, Sukarno's call for yet more revolution combined with his obsession with his anti-Malaysia campaign led some in

high circles to consider other options. Throughout 1965 rumors of intrigues and coups d'état circulated in the capital city. *The Chinese are sending weapons to the Communists*, some said. *They will soon strike.* Others whispered, *The Americans are goading the generals to seize power and crush the Communists!* There had been seven attempts on Sukarno's life.[166] In September 1965 one of these intrigues burst violently upon the capital. This is the event known as Gestapu, the September 30th Movement (Gerakan Tiga Puluh September).

Guided by a shadowy revolutionary council, in the early hours of October 1 members of Sukarno's own palace guard kidnapped and killed six of the president's senior generals. The plotters acted to preempt an anti-Sukarno coup by the "right-wing" generals, whom they believed were corrupt and in complicity with the CIA. Joining them were Sukarno's air force chief, Omar Dhani, and certain PKI operatives and leaders, including Aidit. Three of the murders occurred at Halim Air Force Base, where the movement was headquartered and where units of Communist youth and women's organizations had also assembled; it was here that the bodies of the dead officers were dumped in a well. At some point, Aidit, Dhani, and Sukarno himself were all present at the air base. Sukarno's possible involvement in or sympathy for the movement remains a mystery, one of many in this vexed event. Hamka's old ally Nasution was targeted by the death squads but escaped. (His small daughter was killed.) He later joined Brigadier General Soeharto, who, as commander of Jakarta's strategic reserve, rallied his forces and thwarted the putsch. Nasution had been Indonesia's dominant military figure for more than a decade, but it was the younger man, Soeharto, who now took the lead. He moved quickly to stamp out the rebellion altogether and to restore order in central Java, where several infantry battalions had joined the movement.[167]

What had happened, exactly? No one knows for sure. But in a brilliant propaganda maneuver, Soeharto acted swiftly to impose clarity upon the bewildering event. This is the work of the Communists, he said. They have attempted to seize power and failed. Many people believed him. Rumors about a Communist coup had long been stirring; reports of Aidit and PKI partisans at Halim appeared to confirm these rumors, as did a statement in a party newspaper immediately afterward expressing support for the movement.[168] News accounts of the murders reported, falsely, that the generals had been hideously mutilated. These stories were broadcast widely by foreign and local journalists who were predisposed to believe the worst of the Communists. Propaganda measures like these obscured the role of the army and others in the coup and focused blame solely upon the Communists. Soeharto now moved to eliminate them

altogether—a goal long nurtured by the army leadership and its behind-the-scenes ally, the United States. In doing so, he had the fervent support of the country's organized Muslims.[169]

A massacre of appalling dimensions now engulfed the country. In places, military commanders organized executions themselves, relying on local people to identify Communists and their supporters. Elsewhere, local militias and vigilantes formed by Muslim youth groups murdered their victims using crude weapons and farming tools. Christians and Hindus also joined the anti-Communist hysteria as Indonesia's wrenching culture wars came to a head in acts of murder, rape, and torture. Witnesses described rivers of blood. By the time the terror ended six months later, some half a million people were dead.[170] Suspected Communists and their allies who survived the massacre were arrested and harassed; some were jailed for years to come.[171]

As these grim events unfolded, Hamka's son Rusydi kept him abreast of the news and the rumors, visiting him almost daily at the hospital and bearing the latest foreign newspapers with news of Gestapu. This is how he became aware that the national chair of Muhammadiyah had declared killing Communist Party members *halal*, or permitted, and called for the party's annihilation; that the Al-Azhar Mosque had become "the headquarters" for anti-PKI youths during the "cleansing"; and that members of Muhammadiyah's own youth groups had been directly involved in the killings.[172] Hearing the latter, says Rusydi, Hamka cried, "No!"[173] Another of his sons, Fakhri Amrullah, witnessed the killings personally. In a 1992 documentary film, he led filmmakers to a killing site where he had been shown the severed head of a former classmate (said to be a Communist leader), a heart-wrenching experience that he surely shared with his father.[174] Rusydi says Hamka was sickened by the killings but could do nothing. In the forced calm of his detention and deep into his *tafsir* project, he remained unengaged.

Following Gestapu, Soeharto was clearly the man in charge, but he moved cautiously where Sukarno was concerned. Even as Soeharto maneuvered to marginalize (and in some cases to imprison) Sukarno's key political allies and supporters in the military, Sukarno remained officially president. In March 1966 Sukarno explicitly acknowledged Soeharto's de facto power by granting him "supreme authority to restore order and facilitate the functioning of government."[175] Even so, another year passed before the Provisional People's Consultative Assembly finally stripped Sukarno of his title and named Soeharto acting president.[176] He was named president in 1968 and remained so for the rest of Hamka's life.

For political prisoners like Hamka, Soeharto's cautious transition to a new order meant an extended incarceration. It wasn't until the end of January 1966 that Hamka was released and permitted to return home under house arrest. By March he had been released into "city arrest," and in May he was freed altogether.[177] The Supreme Court and national police force exonerated him from all charges.[178] And on August 15, 1966, Hamka, along with several other former detainees, celebrated a great rally of thanksgiving at Al-Azhar Mosque.[179]

Afterward, Hamka often commented that he was "saved by God" from the "filth and tyranny" of the final days of the Old Order, as the Sukarno era was soon dubbed. Had he not been arrested and detained, he says, he might have become part of the tyranny himself—"simply to protect myself."[180] But "it was God himself," he said, "using the hands of the oppressor, who spared me the mark of the Old Order." Indeed, it was God who unleashed God's power and brought down the Sukarno regime, ended the "era of tyranny," and, one by one, brought its perpetrators down.[181] Hamka accepted without question the claim that the coup d'état of September 30, 1965, was the work of the Communists and referred to it as "Gestapu/PKI."[182] Their grab for power, he said, led God to intervene, and, as a result, the reign of the revolutionary council lasted only fourteen hours. Soeharto acted, and soon, "everyone with weapons throughout Indonesia wreaked revenge. In a matter of months, everything that had been built up for years by the PKI was utterly destroyed and gone to pieces." Naming the party leaders, he said, "Aidit, Nyoto, Lukman, all gone!" The others were swept clean by the people and by the army, who led the fight to "exterminate the Communists in this country."[183] As horrifying as these events were, they were also "a sign of God's justice."[184]

The tables had turned. God had intervened. The army had been God's instrument. But the "anti-Communist Muslim community" had been the army's "faithful friend" in overcoming the great threat. Muslims knew that they couldn't have done it without weapons. But the army could not have done it without the "support of the pure faith of the people."[185] We have been partners in history, he said. On this fact Hamka rested his hopes for his country's New Order.

Yet Hamka was appalled by the mass killings.[186] God is just, he believed, and the right side had prevailed, but we Muslims shouldn't gloat. On the anniversary of Gestapu in 1966, he told his readers "to reflect for a moment, to turn your eyes inward and listen to your heart. Our hearts will say, to those of us who were anti-Communist because of our faith, 'in truth [the Communists] are not our enemies but our friends.' For all these years we have been seeking

each other."[187] In commemorating Gestapu, he said, we pray for the souls of "the generals and other heroes of the revolution and yet other heroes of 'the suffering masses' [*ampera*] that God will make room for them in the afterlife."[188]

Hamka publicly forgave Pramoedya Ananta Toer and his other Sukarno-era tormentors.[189] And when Sukarno himself died in embittered internal exile in June 1970, it was Hamka who led the recitation of faith and final prayers on the night of his burial.[190] "We Indonesians," he said, "are forgiving people." It is true, he said, "I was for years a victim of Sukarno. . . . But we must recognize that despite his great error in enabling the Communists, he was a big person in our history." Lapsing into the vernacular of the revolution, he said, "It was Bung Karno who built our nationalism." "Today, standing by his coffin, I can say sincerely, 'I forgive you, my brother.'"[191]

By striking this self-consciously dramatic pose, Hamka is storytelling, of course. Indeed, he is telling his Great Story. Sukarno has led us to nationhood. Sukarno is Muslim, and in death he is reclaimed and forgiven by believers. And I am his brother. Indeed, in the years after Gestapu, Hamka incorporated Communism's rise and fall and the intrigues, fears, and injustices of Sukarno's Old Order into his master narrative. We pray to God, he said, that such horrible events will not occur again. "And beneath the protection of our belief in God Almighty, and seeking His blessings, we shall build this nation of ours."[192]

6

The New Order

Hamka's life now resumed. He returned to his house across from the Al-Azhar Mosque and to the routines of his daily life. Aside from his prayers and dawn lessons at the mosque, he devoted his mornings to writing, then made the rounds of the city to record radio and television lectures and to teach, visit his publishers, meet with officials and Muhammadiyah leaders, and so on, returning later to read and study and, between the afternoon and sunset prayers, to receive the guests who swarmed to him for advice and favors. (When petitioners begged him for medicine or some kind of potion, Hamka would sometimes give them a glass of water and say, "This is water. Drink it and pray to Allah for recovery.")[1] At night, his son Rusydi relates, he often watched television, especially *News of the World*. On Fridays he was in demand for sermons at the afternoon services.[2] The Sukarno-era ban on his books was lifted, and publishers now approached him to bring out new editions. The fresh income—and royalties from Malaysia, where his books sold well and were never banned—made it possible for him to buy a Holden automobile and to treat himself to small luxuries, such as a Rolex watch, which he wore till he died.[3] He began publishing his *tafsir* and relaunched his magazine *Society's Banner*.

In the summer of 1966 the council of religious scholars of Hamka's home district at Lake Maninjau bestowed upon him the Minangkabau title of *tuanku shaikh*, an honor previously accorded to his father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather. He was now Professor Dr. Shaikh Abdul Malik bin Karim Amrullah, as he duly signed himself in introducing his new *Tafsir al-Azhar* in 1967.[4]

Hamka was aging. His diabetes and other afflictions slowed him down. He no longer smoked (another boon of his incarceration).[5] He had carried a cane for many years as an affect of *ulama*hood but now he actually needed one to

steady himself. His wife, Siti Raham, or Ummi, suffered badly from high blood pressure and diabetes and the inevitable stresses of the past many years. Hamka became more solicitous of her, says Rusydi, and she now accompanied him on his many trips around the country and abroad, including the hajj in 1968—all this until 1972, when Siti Raham succumbed to her many illnesses at the age of fifty-eight and left Hamka bereft.[6] He had relied on her utterly, not only for his day-to-day needs and as mother to his ten children and many grandchildren, but as house-mother to the countless relatives and houseguests and young protégés whom he invariably invited to stay for a while.[7] Siti Raham had also grounded him. Rusydi captures their mature, down-to-earth relationship in a story. Hamka is addressing a sunset, declaiming on its beauty and transience in a volley of alliterative sentences. Ummi comments, "First you gaze [at it] on end; then you lecture us about it on end."[8]

A year and a half after Siti Raham's death, as Hamka's own illnesses worsened, the children arranged a new marriage for him. Hajjah Siti Khadijah was just about Siti Raham's age and from a devout family from Cirebon in Java. She now assumed her role as Hamka's helpmate and keeper and as mother and grandmother for the final years of his life, years in which Hamka would once again play a significant public role.[9]

Engaging the New Order

For Hamka and other modernist Muslims, the New Order offered something akin to a fresh start. Gone was the hysteria of the later Sukarno years and also the threat of Communism. Rehabilitated, figures like Hamka were once again welcome in public life, although a certain stigma still clung to the Masjumi members who had rebelled in 1958. (This would include Hamka's close friend Mohammad Natsir.) Moreover, many in Hamka's circle of like-minded Muslims considered the military and particularly the army their friends and allies. After all, in the dark days of the early 1960s, it had been figures like General Nasution who had slipped in with influence and money to support endeavors such as *Islam's Echo*, the Al-Azhar Mosque, and the *dakwa* campaign. And it had been the army, of course, that acted to bring the country back to its senses by "sweeping the country clean" of Communists, as Hamka sometimes put it.[10] At first a certain wariness prevailed, but after the provisional Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (People's Consultative Assembly, or DPR) definitively removed Sukarno from office and named Soeharto acting president, Hamka for one was ready to embrace the new state of affairs.

And so it happened, in January 1968, that Hamka himself rose to give the *khutbah* sermon at the presidential palace on Idul Fitri, the great holiday celebrating the end of the fast. In a brilliant sermon, he captured the historic moment and placed it within the Great Story of Islam and Indonesia.

"Let us give thanks," he said, "because we have broken the power of the Communists, who once held this country in their grip, even the [presidential] palace." Surely, he said, "this has astonished the world." What is the secret of our victory? It is our faith. "There is no God but God." Somewhere between seven hundred to a thousand years ago, he went on, "the echo of the Qur'an arrived from the desert to this country, our beautiful archipelago. Our ancestors, who never met the Prophet Muhammad, immediately expressed faith in his teachings." Without force or conquest, consciously and unconsciously, Islam seeped into our souls. Our greatest kings, he said, among them Sultan Agung of Mataram and Sultan Iskandar Muda Mahkota Alam of Aceh, proclaimed, "There is no God but God" and—Hamka pivots, without missing a beat—so did those who defended our newly proclaimed independence in 1945. It was this faith that empowered the heroes who stood up to English bombs and artillery in the fight for Surabaya in November 1945 and (deftly pivoting again) those who rose just two years ago to defeat the Communists. Ask General Soeharto himself—Soeharto was sitting just a few feet away—ask him, Hamka said, where the strength came from to suppress the Communists. Was it from rockets, from guided missiles, warships, or planes? "No, . . . it was the power of 'There is no God but God' in General Soeharto's soul."[11]

This same faith, Hamka went on, is the basis of our national creed, Panca Sila, which begins with belief in one Almighty God. From this essential Muslim belief, he said, flow all the other elements of our national creed: humanitarianism, nationalism (feeling part of a people), social justice, and consensus-based democracy. Indeed, God has appointed us human beings as his caliphs on earth. We must move from the mosque into parliament and practice democracy. Doing so, he said, was a "logical and natural" outcome of our faith.[12] (Here Hamka is expressing some anxiety, since although democracy may be a "logical and natural" outcome of Islam, it wasn't an obvious outcome of a military putsch.) Communism, said Hamka, had threatened not only Islam but all religions. Its success would have meant that not only our mosques but also our churches, synagogues, monasteries, and shrines of all kinds would have become "warehouses, comedy halls, and horse stalls." Its defeat means that people of all religions can worship freely in Indonesia. As Muslims, he said, we are required by the Qur'an to assure this.[13]

In closing, Hamka prayed for Indonesia and for General Soeharto. He reminded his audience, full of generals and politicians, that God sees beyond our uniforms and high status directly into our hearts. And he thanked God that, beginning now, "our hearts are in agreement."[14]

In this prominent and widely circulated sermon, Hamka framed Indonesia's recent history in the most positive light possible and added his own enthusiastic voice to Soeharto and the army's legitimacy. Hamka's optimism was sincere, but it was also aspirational. For, to be sure, all hearts were not in agreement.[15]

In their euphoria over the defeat of Communism, Hamka and other modernists had underestimated the residual anger in army circles over the Islam-linked rebellions of the 1950s and especially those of 1958, in which senior Masjumi figures were implicated. They were shocked in December 1966 when a statement from the armed forces headquarters identified both the Communist Party and Masjumi as equally unworthy of rehabilitation in the new regime—both having deviated from the 1945 constitution and Panca Sila. Soeharto and his team therefore blocked attempts at restoring the old party and intervened in the creation and leadership of a new one.[16] These actions comported with significant shifts in the makeup of the officer corps, including the purging of "right-wing" Muslims after the rebellions.[17] The military officers now consolidating their power in Soeharto's New Order were predominantly Javanese and, according to Robert Hefner, were "deeply skeptical of civilian politicians" and "convinced that they alone could defend the country's ethnic and religious minorities against Muslim majoritarianism."[18] Contrary to their hopes, Muslims of all stripes soon found themselves in a state of tension with a regime whose hegemony grew stronger as Soeharto and his team became ever more confident and astute.

Hamka's good friend Mohammad Natsir had defected to the Sumatran rebellion in 1958 and therefore earned the army's lasting enmity. It was not surprising that the new regime rejected a revived Masjumi-like party under his leadership. But Mohammad Roem, another friend, was a Masjumi moderate and, like Hamka, was not implicated in the rebellion. Even so, his bid to lead the new party was also rejected.[19] Natsir's response to being marginalized was to devote himself to the public propagation of Islam through *dakwah*. His new organization, the Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (Indonesian Council for Islamic Propagation, or DDII), established in May 1967, took a stance of principled opposition to the Soeharto regime and advanced a more "boldly political" program than Muhammadiyah, the largest and oldest *dakwah* organization in the country.[20] A life-long Muhammadiyah member and now, still, a member of its senior leadership committee (Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah),

Hamka remained committed to the parent organization and its more accommodationist approach.[21] It was true, he said, that under Sukarno's old order many Muslims "sold out" by becoming cozy with the regime and also with the PKI. This was wrong. Now, under the New Order, "there is a chance that the voice of al-Qur'an can be broadcast freely, but there is also the possibility that our goals are far off." Under these circumstances, it would be wrong not to exert ourselves "to change the direction of the country in a Muslim direction," even though we are certain to be slandered for "assisting . . . the government" in doing so.[22]

For the next few years, however, Hamka worked exclusively in the public domain—preaching, writing, teaching, and conveying his thoughts weekly to readers in *Society's Banner*, where his From Heart to Heart column was a popular feature. It was in his magazine that Hamka often contextualized social and political issues and got things off his chest. In November 1967, for example, he took up the case of Muslim youths in Makassar who had ransacked twelve Christian churches. This was a clear violation of the Qur'an, a sin. Moreover, it was the sort of thing that gave Islam a bad reputation in the rest of the world, where commentators inevitably spoke of Muslim terrorism when such things happened. The event was so alarming within Indonesia that General Soeharto himself paid Makassar a visit.

Interreligious conflict was on the rise, Hamka said. Why? In this case, the youths—although clearly in the wrong—had been goaded into action by a Protestant pastor who was alleged to have called the Prophet Muhammad an adulterer (for his many wives) and an ignorant man (since it was well known that Muhammad was, in fact, illiterate). Such provocations by Christians were dangerous, he said, and they are an indication of something larger: that "the Muslim community that for all these years has prided itself on being the majority is being pushed aside."[23] This apparent threat, voiced more openly in the wake of Communism's demise, soon emerged as a gnawing source of angst for Hamka and the modernists in the New Order era.

Hamka often framed his From Heart to Heart essays as answers to questions. In a typical opening in 1968, he wrote, "Some youths approached me and posed some questions that were evidently stirring in their hearts." Despite our many Muslim heroes, they said, we Indonesians are now in danger of being colonized again, of "all becoming Christians and of becoming the puppets of Western states, just as Filipinos became puppets of Spain and America." Despite this, the Soeharto government wouldn't rehabilitate Masjumi, which stands against this threat as it also stands against the threat of Communism. "Isn't this policy illogical?"[24]

Alas, it is logical, Hamka answered. Consider our history. The fear and mistrust of Islam, he said, has deep roots in our colonial past. Indonesians who received Western educations under the Dutch became infected with this mistrust. They were trained to be "the Dutch of the East." Even as they acquired valuable new knowledge, many of them also accepted the Dutch view of Islam as a dying religion characterized by "filthy mosque ponds and scabies-ridden students." Meanwhile, Indonesian Muslims who were educated in prayer houses (*surau*) and other traditional schools were often taught to "hate everything that smells of the West." The Indonesian revolution brought these two groups together. But once independence was achieved, Western-educated Indonesians naturally came forward to establish the state, while the more traditional Muslims were put out to pasture. The more activist ones were goaded into rebellion and labeled as fanatics.[25] This gulf still divides our society.

Here Hamka identifies himself with the *surau*-educated Muslims and comments that "even though I wear pants and neckties, after sitting for five minutes in a chair, I unconsciously cross my legs beneath me," as though sitting *surau* style on the floor.[26] He goes on to say that, twenty-two years after the revolution, our educated elites are "still more comfortable unburdening their hearts in Dutch." Indeed, many such people worshiped at his mosque, including his close friends Natsir and Roem. Even such Western-educated Muslim leaders (he also mentions Mohammad Hatta and Syafruddin Prawiranegara) "don't feel the same way about religion" as those who were educated in a religious milieu from childhood. In time, Hamka said, this chasm must be bridged.[27]

Another thorn in Hamka's flesh was the so-called Jakarta Charter, a statement requiring Muslims to abide by *shari'a* law that was elided at the last minute from the preamble of Indonesia's founding constitution in August 1945, allegedly to placate Christian nationalists from eastern Indonesia.[28] Mohammad Hatta, the Minangkabau Muslim politician whom Hamka admired most of all, had defended this elision in the interest of the new nation's wholeness and unity. And at the time, Hamka had endorsed the new nation and its constitution "as it was."[29] Then, and now, too, Hamka cared most about the *character* of the national society and rejected the idea of a religious or theocratic state. We Muslims, he wrote in June 1968, are not proposing that "the Republic of Indonesia become the Islamic Republic of Indonesia."[30]

But the events of the intervening years had taught Hamka that Indonesia "as it was" was not something fixed in history but something subject to continuous contestation. In the Konstituante, the constitutional assembly, therefore, he had argued along with Natsir and other members of the Muslim faction that Islam, not Panca Sila, was the true basis of the nation; he had supported

efforts to reinstate the charter. In the intervening years, Panca Sila had become the shibboleth of Indonesia's national identity.[31] Once an expression of Sukarnoism, it was now the foundational creed of the New Order. By emphasizing the creed's first principle—belief in one Almighty God—Hamka now interpreted Panca Sila as an Islam-based vision, as he did, for example, in his ebullient Idul Fitri sermon at the palace. But if this was so, and considering that "Muslims are a majority," why was there such reluctance to allow Muslims to apply Muslim law?[32]

One reason lies, he said (reiterating a theme much on his mind), in the Western bias of our educated classes, who prefer Dutch laws or Swiss or American or Russian laws, or any laws at all "so long as they are not Muslim." Despite such biases, he said, Muslim law is equal to the test of modernity and—constantly revised and reframed through *ijtihad*—capable of addressing all aspects of modern political, social, and economic life, as well as mighty affairs of state such as war and peace. Without question, Indonesian Muslim jurors could place the *shari'a* within the laws of the land. Christian Protestants and Catholics also oppose application of the *shari'a*, even though it wouldn't apply to them under the Jakarta Charter. For Christians, Hamka wrote, the issue is proselytization. Under the *shari'a*, it is unlawful to force or trick anyone into becoming Muslim. Likewise, a Muslim may not leave the faith. This stipulation would have a grave impact on Christian efforts to convert Muslims deceitfully, "with sweets and rice or with [political] power, should they achieve it." (The perception of a wave of Christian conversion was true. Following the cataclysm of 1965, writes Robert Hefner, some 3 percent of the Javanese population converted from "nominal Islam to Christianity." During the following two decades, "the number of Christians in Java increased by another two million, a rate three to four times that of simple population growth.")[33] Muslims are in a weak position these days, Hamka said, because their leaders and political organizations have been shut out and emasculated. Yet he believed Muslims should still strive for this goal, without which, he said, we "still feel colonized."[34]

In the 1930s, during his early heyday in Medan, Hamka had been among the first writers to notice and celebrate the impact of cultural hybridity in the burgeoning colonial cities of the Indies. In Deli, Sumatra, he had observed new ways of living and speaking among the ethnically mixed population of a bustling plantation district, and he had identified these new people as Indonesians. In his Great Story, these very people would be shaped not by the narrow and crippling customs of the village world but by a modern and forward-looking understanding of Islam. This applied to Christians, too, of whom there were many around Medan, where Lutheran missionaries had been quite successful.

In his vision, Christians and others would be integrated into Indonesia's burgeoning national society as shaped tolerantly by Islam. Indeed, Hamka enunciated this very vision in his Idul Fitri sermon at the palace.

President Soeharto also envisioned an integrated national society, one shaped not by Islam but by the state. In his vision, Islam that was too assertive was a problem. "Our objective," he said, "is nothing more than the integration of all layers, groups, forces, and generations of our nation. . . . In this way we can preserve all layers, groups, and forces of our country from . . . inner conflicts and tensions which become the source of division and national wounds."[35] An interesting application of this idea occurred in December 1968, when, by happenstance, the two great religious holidays of Islam and Christianity occurred within five days of each other, Idul Fitri on the twenty-first and Christmas on the twenty-fifth. This led to an "inspiration" (as Hamka noted wryly) among certain New Order bureau heads and cabinet ministers. An order went forth that the commemoration of Christmas and Idul Fitri (particularly the core *halal bihalal* ritual of mutual forgiveness) be celebrated together in government offices with both Christian pastors and Muslim *ulama*s present to officiate.

This astonished Hamka. Only people who do not take religion seriously (people for whom religion is an amusement) would welcome such a thing, or perhaps the syncretists "who seek out the common features of all the differing [religions] and fashion something new out of them." This sort of thing is a perversion of the Muslim concept of tolerance, which is based on respect. If you are a believing Christian, you will naturally excuse yourself from a Muslim act of worship. And if you are truly a believing Muslim, you will do the same when a Christian pastor prays to his "Three Gods." Participation in rituals like these, in which people are "more or less forced to pray together and worship together," is also a perversion of Panca Sila. Yet this is occurring in the name of Panca Sila by "people who practice no religion whatsoever [and who] conceive of themselves as the highest leaders, transcending *ulama*s and priests, *kyai*s and pastors." What we have, he said, is "Panca Sila *boven alles*."[36]

As the New Order matured in the coming years, Soeharto and his government followed this strategy exactly: "Panca Sila above all." This was not Panca Sila as Hamka liked to interpret it but Panca Sila as a reified creed of loyalty to the state and subject to the state's interpretation.[37] Hamka saw this clearly in early 1969. "Whoever doesn't agree" with the regime, he wrote, "is accused of being anti-Panca Sila, intolerant, and un-Indonesian."[38] One year had passed since his hopeful sermon at the palace.

Meanwhile, Soeharto tightened the screws politically. Not willing to abandon the apparatus of democracy, he chose to intervene proactively in the political process so that Indonesian elections and other consultative processes

did not yield troubling results. The DPR, which appointed him president in 1968, was solidly stacked in his favor.[39] His operatives also acted to ensure that the new post-Masjumi party, Parmusi, was led by people faithful to the regime. The party did badly in the first New Order elections of 1971, gaining only 7.36 percent of the vote, a huge drop from Masjumi's strong showing of 20.9 percent in 1955.[40] Publicly, Hamka congratulated Soeharto's winning party, Golkar, and told reporters that "if not 90 percent, then 60 percent [of Golkar members] are Muslim. I believe they are good Muslims. And the generals," he added, "most of them are students of mine in matters of religion."[41] Two years after these elections, the regime combined Parmusi with the country's other self-consciously Muslim party, Nahdlatul Ulama, to form the Partai Persatuan dan Pembangunan (Party of Unity and Development, known popularly by its initials, PPP) in yet another successful maneuver to emasculate organized Islam as a political force.[42] Reflecting on this and other defeats, Hamka would no longer try to put a good face on things. "We are weak in every respect," he wrote in 1973.[43]

The voice of the modernists was therefore considerably dampened in the new People's Consultative Council (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat, or MPR), which soon took up issues of urgent interest to Muslims. These included a new marriage bill, which, as described by Robert Hefner, "would impose sweeping restrictions on polygamy, give women greater rights in divorce than recognized under Islamic law, and move most of the authority for marriage and divorce out of Islamic courts."[44] Among other things, the proposed law imposed marriage age limits of twenty-one for men and eighteen for women and imposed no restrictions at all on people who planned to marry across national, ethnic, and religious lines. Hamka opposed the law vociferously, and after a public storm (and quiet behind-the-scenes consultations between Soeharto's trusted military advisors and Muslim leaders), the DPR—the regime's lower house—rescinded it.[45]

A second urgent issue involved steps to recognize officially (alongside Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, and Hinduism) certain "belief groups," or adherents of mystical beliefs and practices dear to many Javanese but anathema to modernist Muslims. Representing the legacies of animism and Java's pre-Muslim Hindu-Buddhist civilization, these hallowed worldviews and practices, known as *kebatinan* and sometimes called Javanism, were popularly thought to date back to the great Javanese kingdom of Majapahit, which many Indonesians viewed romantically as the precursor to modern Indonesia.[46] Their adherents embraced them as "authentically Indonesian."[47] Hamka rejected this and scorned the so-called Javanese religion as a corruption of both Hinduism and Buddhism, not to mention Islam. It's not a true religion,

he said. Indonesia's minister of religion, Mukti Ali, was in firm agreement.[48] But at some point, nevertheless, the government approved the Secretariat of Belief Groups to represent these sects, and the issue remained a sore one.

As a popular writer and religious authority who did a lot of his thinking in public (in short essays that he dashed off in bursts of rapid typing), Hamka sometimes seems to have been swatting at flies as he confronted one aggravation after another. Yet he was working from a deep pool of experience and knowledge and from a consistent point of view. In many ways, Hamka was still struggling with the same big problem that preoccupied him in his youth: how to reconcile Islam with modernity in one's private life and one's national society—and not just any national society, but Indonesia. Working within a colonial context, it was easier perhaps to disaggregate the good from the bad: colonialism and predatory capitalism were bad; Western knowledge was good; feudalism, superstition, and small-mindedness were bad; Islam was good, especially Islam as cleansed and reinvigorated by the brilliant reformers of the late nineteenth century. Indeed, explaining and proselytizing this kind of Islam had consumed Hamka's early life as he wrote and lived out the first chapters of his Great Story. In the context of Indonesia's anticolonial struggle, Hamka was a romantic striver. Now he realized, however, after the traumas of the Sukarno years and the accruing disappointments of the New Order, that Indonesia was not as he had hoped; moreover, the forces ranged against his hopes were more complex and deep-rooted than he had once realized. Although he could still conjure a romantically hopeful vision of the country's future in ebullient public speeches, Hamka, entering his sixties, now faced the future soberly.

What puzzled him, and what he resented most of all, was the idea that Islam itself was a threat to the nation. He found the source of this idea in colonialism, the unfortunate vehicle through which Western knowledge reached Indonesians—in the beginning only a very small number of them who were privileged with Dutch educations. To these elite few, the Dutch passed their own scorn for Islam but also many important and useful things. Hidden among the boons, however, was another poison pill. This was secularism, which places religion outside the worldly matters of science, economics, and government or spurns it altogether. In the West, the rise of secularism had freed people to think beyond the narrow teachings of the Christian Church and freed European populations from the scourge of endless religious wars. But it had also loosened European Christians from their ethical moorings and led to the corrosion of decent human behavior, the vulgar consequences of which were now spreading across the world and invading Indonesia in the name of modernity: miniskirts, à gogo, drunkenness, massage parlors, and nightclubs with "naked dancing."[49] Communism itself was a radical outgrowth of secularism. But another and

perhaps more sinister consequence of secularism in Indonesia was the trivializing, off-hand treatment of religion by New Order officials who saw no problem with combining Christian and Muslim acts of worship.

Was it possible to reap the benefits of modernity without embracing secularism? Can Indonesians be modern without becoming Western? Hamka fervently believed so. In addressing this question for two college students in 1968, he called upon one of the familiar mantras of his Great Story. To be modern, he told them, we don't need to copy everything from the West, only the useful things. Don't be Mr. Follow! Indeed, the dichotomy of East and West is false. The Qur'an teaches us that "Islam is universal." It also enjoins us always to improve ourselves. As for becoming modern, wasn't Muhammad himself a modernizer, bringing political unity to quarreling Arab tribes, raising the status and welfare of women, and developing economic institutions to address the common good?[50] We should embrace modernity in this spirit.

Hamka clung to his independence for four and a half years, spurning an appointment as Indonesian ambassador to Saudi Arabia, among other things.[51] In the meantime, Soeharto consolidated his power by expanding dramatically the role of military officers in the civilian apparatus of government (as appointed officials high and low and as appointed representatives in the DPR) and by advancing his own political party at the expense of the others, whose increasingly limited freedom of action rendered them virtually powerless. Democracy in the New Order, it was now clear, amounted to a state-orchestrated charade. Among Muslims, distrust of the regime deepened. Yet the regime was clearly here to stay. What to do?

This question bred consternation among the community's spiritual and thought leaders. Some chose to play the game and found what agency they could in the regime-configured Islamic party, the PPP, and as bureaucrats and functionaries in the government, including the fast-expanding Ministry of Religion. Others like Hamka stood on the outside and found their agency as writers, community leaders, and members of mass organizations such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama and smaller think-tanks and advocacy groups such as Mohammad Natsir's Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII).[52] For Hamka, one high moment during this vexing period was an honorary degree conferred on him in 1974 by the National University of Malaysia in a ceremony led by Prime Minister Tun Razak.[53]

The Ulama Council

The New Order did not limit its approach to Islam to defanging it as a political threat. After all, the great majority of its own officials, including military officers,

were practicing Muslims. Moreover, Soeharto and his advisers were not naive about the influence exercised in public by the legions of *ulama*s and *kyai*s who preached and taught among the people daily or about the senior *ulama*s and intellectuals who shaped and guided their thoughts and words. They therefore strove to win friends among the *umma*, the entire Muslim community, and to bend the influence of its leaders to New Order ends. Thus arose the idea of the national Ulama Council, or Majelis Ulama, in which religious authorities representing all the country's Muslim orientations would meet together officially to address issues important to the community at large and to issue *fatwa*s about contested matters of law and practice—which foods are forbidden (*haram*), for example, and when, exactly, Ramadan ends. Planning for the council began in 1973, and in June 1975 minister of religion Mukti Ali approached Hamka about chairing it.[54]

As Mukti Ali was well aware, Hamka had a prominent national profile as a writer and *ulama*. He was a Muhammadiyah Muslim who eschewed fanaticism and was almost unique among senior Muhammadiyah figures in being regularly invited to speak at Nahdlatul Ulama functions. Hence, he was a potential bridge to all factions. Indeed, Hasan Basri, who later served as vice chair on the council, called Hamka "the only conceivable choice."[55]

Mukti Ali's approach flattered Hamka.[56] Although in 1970 he had forcefully opposed the creation of a similar council, he now weighed things differently.[57] Despite his profound reservations about his country's new government, he didn't see the point of opposing it absolutely. For one thing, he remained grateful to Soeharto and the army for their stand against Communism. Although Indonesia had passed through its recent crisis successfully, Communism itself was still a threat in Southeast Asia. Just a few months before, in April 1975, Communists had seized power in all of Vietnam; New Order propaganda stressed the danger of "latent Communism" in Indonesia.[58] We need a compelling counterideology, Hamka said. "In this situation, Islam is our weapon," and "we must certainly cooperate with the government, which is also anti-Communist," he told his son Rusydi.[59] The deepening mistrust and resentment between Muslims and the government also troubled him. It wasn't all the government's fault, he said. We Muslims have gotten into the habit of viewing "all efforts and regulations coming from the government to manage and develop the country as wrong. We've lost our perspective."[60]

Opposing the government also carried increasingly heavy risks. In January 1974 large public protests erupted in several districts in Jakarta, including a shopping area in Hamka's own neighborhood. The protests, catalyzed by the visit of Japanese Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka to Indonesia, were instigated

in part by Muslim student activists. But they appear to have been manipulated into deadly riots by regime-sponsored provocateurs and ended with a bloody government crackdown and widespread arrests. Soeharto's intelligence chief, Ali Moertopo, implicated Masjumi in the violence.[61] The message was clear. As Adrian Vickers writes, "The New Order's claim to represent law and order meant that its enemies were to be ruthlessly suppressed."[62] Meanwhile, regime-guided state bodies such as the DPR were busy creating guidelines and regulations with profound implications for Hamka and other proponents of Islam for Indonesia.[63]

Hamka knew that many people in his circle of confidants would oppose his accepting the position. Mohammad Roem was adamantly against it. Natsir opposed the creation of the council itself but in private counseled Hamka to accept the chairmanship. "But remain free," he told him. "Don't speak for the government. Remember that your responsibility is to represent Muslims to the government, not the government to Muslims."[64] Hamka also talked things over with Muhammadiyah leaders, who offered their support.[65] People "still believe in me," he told Rusydi.[66] After much stewing, he decided to accept. As a gesture of independence, he forfeited his government salary and pension, an example other council members followed. He was fully aware that many activist Muslims were contemptuous of him, all the more so after news photographs appeared of him flanked by Soeharto's ministers of religion and information.[67] In explaining his decision to Rusydi, he said that this wasn't just any chair he was filling (punning on the word "chair" in the Indonesian meaning of "official position"), but it was "an electric chair!"[68]

Hamka's appointment was made official in a vote of acclamation by a gallery of *ulama*s representing a cross section of Indonesian Muslim life, from the big organizations such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama to a number of smaller ones plus several military chaplains and independent *ulama*s and *kyai*s.[69] His formal installation occurred at the newly opened Taman Mini Indonesia, an Indonesia-in-miniature theme park promoted by Soeharto's wife that became an instant icon of the New Order regime.[70] The president himself opened the ceremonies alongside several senior New Order officials. In his acceptance speech, Hamka addressed his fellow *ulama*s and struck an independent tone.

There are those in government, Hamka told them, who expect us to "indoctrinate the people so that they will be submissive to the government." They expect us to produce *fatwa*s designed to "make their work easier." These same people believe, in this age of heedless ambition, sycophancy, and status seeking, that the *ulama*s can "be bought." But we can't be bought! This is because we

have already long ago sold ourselves to God. This is what the Qur'an teaches. Being aware of this will make our work easier. On the face of it, our task seems impossible. Standing in between the government and the people, we are like rice-flour *bika* cakes that are fired on both sides at the same time. On the one hand, we will feel heat from the government above us if we don't act as it wants. On the other hand, we will feel heat from the people below us if we don't speak and act on their behalf.[71] The solution, he said, is also found in the Qur'an: "God will find a way out for those who are mindful of Him."[72] If we stay focused on what we believe, we will know what to do.

We should remember, Hamka told the clerics, the long line of *ulama*s and *kyai*s who have preceded us in Indonesia, many of whom were martyrs to the faith and to our quest for freedom from the Dutch, the Japanese, and the Communists. Warming to a big theme in his Great Story, he linked the creation of the nation to Muslim heroes and activists from Aceh to Java to Sulawesi—every corner of "our country." We should keep these people in mind when the president and his ministers heap praise on us. We don't deserve it! In the past, he said, the lives of our *ulama*s shined like bright lamps. But over time this light diminished, and "finally it's as though the lamp has run out of oil." It's no wonder that people these days are disillusioned with us or that they tell me that "I have entered a trap or become drunk with compliments and praise." We must strive not to become doctors who treat others but who cannot cure themselves.[73] Our role, he said, is to participate in development, to give advice to the government whether it solicits it or not—asserting our opinions freely—and to bolster the spiritual strength of our country. All of this can be summed up in the Qur'an's injunction "to order what is good and forbid what is wrong."[74]

Here and there in his speech, Hamka alluded to the power structure of the New Order, and in one passage he described the ladder of power explicitly: from ordinary people, farmers, and soldiers to high government officials, ministers, and generals.[75] Hamka framed his remarks to give ritual deference to Soeharto and invoked the president's decree in 1967, which declared that "whoever already embraces a religion may not be made the target of propaganda of another religion."[76] This was the only policy matter mentioned in the entire speech, a signal of its urgency. Otherwise, Hamka clung to his grand theme. Whether we like it or not, he said, the government is coming closer to us, and we are coming closer to the government: "Our goal is the happiness of our country and our people, and to root Islam firmly in this nation of ours."[77]

Hamka's daily life was suddenly busier. As chair of the Ulama Council, he sat atop a pyramid of committees and councils embedded within the Ministry of Religion. The council itself operated under a twenty-four-member board of

advisors that included the ministers of religion, interior, and education and health.[78] A special air-conditioned office was built for Hamka on the grounds of the Al-Azhar Mosque, with carpeting, copious space, and a huge desk for the chair himself.[79] He could thus attend to the business of the council without leaving the confines of his other daily routines. A professional staff looked after the council's day-to-day business, headed by Hasan Basri as its first vice chair and including Lukman Harun, a rising Muhammadiyah insider and good friend of Hamka's son Rusydi. Rusydi himself now served as publisher of *Society's Banner* and also as his father's personal secretary and aide. With this young team to keep the wheels turning—and to "head him off" when necessary, as Lukman Harun put it—Hamka concentrated on leading meetings, speaking publicly on behalf of the council, conducting negotiations with senior ministers (and facilitating introductions for Muslim politicians), and leading official delegations to meet the president.[80] As chair of the Ulama Council, Hamka also traveled frequently to other Muslim countries and led Indonesia's delegations to international meetings. He wasn't utterly free, of course. His position required him to respect the president, which he did conspicuously, and to follow certain protocols. When he spoke or preached outside Jakarta, for example, the national police sometimes warned him off sensitive subjects.[81]

One function of the Ulama Council was to rule on contested matters facing the Muslim community. For this it had a *fatwa* committee. The council's *fatwa*s did not have the force of law, only the authority of national prominence and of ecumenical consensus, since its decisions reflected the outcome of arguments among the country's various orientations.[82] It ruled, for example, that the death penalty was supported by the Qur'an and, Hamka said, "necessary in a nation of laws."[83] It concluded that sex-change operations and sexual enhancements were forbidden to Muslims, along with tubal ligation and vasectomies for the purpose of birth control. In contrast, artificial insemination and test-tube babies were acceptable if the sperm and egg came from a legally married couple. These possibilities represented triumphs of science, and, Hamka explained, "God does not forbid the *umma* from pursuing broader knowledge."[84] It was also alright to pray for rain—indeed, the council itself organized rain prayers—and also to plan a hajj with the intention of dying during the pilgrimage. Food and drinks that contained forbidden elements such as alcohol and pork by-products were forbidden, it said, and so were interfaith marriages. The council members were divided on the problem of heart transplants.[85]

As chair of the council, Hamka explained its decisions to reporters and weighed in publicly on other matters. In 1978 he explained why people who died in a plane crash while performing the hajj were legitimate martyrs and

would enter heaven, for example.[86] And two years later he poured oil over the waters roiling around the question of when, exactly, the feast ending Ramadan could begin. The government announced that Idul Fitri would fall on Monday, July 14, based on physical observations of the moon. But others began feasting the day before, on the Sunday, in accordance with calculations based on mathematics. Reporters asked him, Which is correct? "They're both the same," he said; both teachings are valid. He then, typically, recalled two stories from the Hadith in which Muhammad settled an argument between believers about when and how to pray by saying that the practices of both sides were acceptable.[87]

On another front of great interest to Indonesian Muslims, Hamka helped to negotiate with the government of Saudi Arabia a real boon for the country's pilgrims. With the minister of religion Mukti Ali on an official mission to Jeddah, he helped to secure the right of Indonesian hajis to choose their pilgrimage *shaykh*s ahead of time, in Jakarta. The *shaykh*s were responsible for all manner of pilgrimage arrangements, from food and lodging to transportation and ritual instruction. The abuses of Arab *shaykh*s in Mecca had long been the subject of aggravation among Indonesian pilgrims. Hamka himself had written about this in his first freelance articles as a reporter in 1927![88] Afterward, President Soeharto congratulated Mukti Ali and Hamka for their breakthrough in a special ceremony photographed conspicuously for the newspapers.[89] This was typical. From the beginning, the Ulama Council, with Hamka at the helm, enjoyed a prominent public face.

Hamka's public prominence carried some risks. He could be naive, as his friends acknowledged. When one of his late-afternoon visitors in August 1976 spoke to him passionately about moral decline in society and the failures of government development programs, for example, he nodded absentmindedly in agreement and agreed to autograph some papers. He noticed the signature of his idol Mohammad Hatta already affixed to the papers and, without bothering to read them carefully, signed his name. This, at least, is how he explained the event later, when Sawito Kartowibowo, a mystic with a small cult following and an ex-employee of the Agriculture Department, was on trial for subversion. The document, which was signed by the heads of both the Protestant and Catholic national councils, called for the overthrow of President Soeharto and his replacement by Hatta. The police caught up with Sawito eventually, and Hamka was duly embarrassed when the story broke in the press. His radio and television broadcasts were suspended for a week in October to let the situation "cool off," leaving his friends and colleagues rolling their eyes in exasperation.[90]

Hamka loved having a high public profile, being photographed for the newspapers, and having a talk channel to the president. He enjoyed being invited abroad and traveling first class. But his son Rusydi tells us that Hamka's shiny new office building on the mosque grounds meant nothing to him. He had no use for the electric bell button on his desk for summoning staff members and always hailed people by their names. After a while, he stopped holding office there altogether and worked mainly from home and the mosque offices.[91] Despite being "close to power," Hamka found his experience as chair of the Ulama Council a sour one. He told his family that aside from his humiliation at Medan in 1945, it was the most difficult time of his life.[92]

Part of this was due, no doubt, to the unrelenting criticism he faced from angry Muslims who opposed his collaboration with the New Order regime. During the 1975 Muktamar Mesjid Dunia (World Congress of Mosques), for example, one of his local opponents wrote to the organizers in Mecca to accuse him of supporting a "pro-Christian" government in Indonesia; as a result, he was frozen out of the proceedings and never invited to speak.[93] Slights such as this dogged him. But the larger reason was that as a public leader of the *umma* in New Order Indonesia, Hamka found himself constantly on the defensive. He was "close to power" but, in fact, he had very little power of his own.

What influence Hamka did have, however, he used forcefully, much to the surprise of his critics.[94] Under his leadership, the council raised several questions with the MPR about the impact of the government's development programs, including the growing gap between rich and poor, corruption, and moral decadence (e.g., the proliferation of nightclubs and gambling outlets in Jakarta), as well as the need for education reforms and for more government attention to rural society and to the non-Chinese Indonesian business sector.[95]

In a matter close to his heart, Hamka also pressed the president on the issue of Christian proselytization. After citing passages from the Qur'an forbidding Muslims "to take as allies those who have fought against you for your faith," he described the many ways in which Christians in Indonesia were attempting to entice poor Muslims away from their faith with money and food and schools.[96] Soeharto evidently concurred that it was wrong to tantalize poor people to convert to Christianity with material inducements. Also, addressing a particularly sharp bone in Hamka's throat, Soeharto agreed to order his officials to purchase and run as a government service a hospital that had been established by Baptists in Bukittinggi, the Minangkabau heartland.[97]

Hamka was a fervent believer in religious harmony, and he frequently wrote and spoke about Islam's history of tolerance. Christians had lived

peacefully and prosperously in several Islam-dominated societies over fourteen centuries, paying *jizyah* taxes in lieu of the Islamic *zakat*. He imagined religious harmony in Indonesia the same way. Members of differing religions should live side by side as Indonesians but worship among themselves. Mutual respect was the key. Trying to convert members of other religions violated this respect. This was the source of Hamka's angst and anger about Christianity, an issue that would dog his years as chair of the council.

Another nagging issue was how to interpret the national creed, Panca Sila. In meetings with senior officials of the Dewan Pertahanan Nasional (National Defense Council) in August 1976, Hamka and the council openly defied the government's assertion in the provisional Broad Guidelines of Indonesian State Policy that all five *silas*, or principles, of the Panca Sila carried equal weight. In a speech sketched out hurriedly in Arabic letters (reports Rusydi), Hamka recited the preamble to Indonesia's 1945 constitution (Undang-Undang Dasar Republik Indonesia): "By the grace of God Almighty and motivated by the noble desire to live a free national life, the people of Indonesia hereby declare their independence."[98] Repeating his oft-expressed view, he said that as chair of the Ulama Council he believed that "the first *sila*, [belief in] one Almighty God, cannot be equated or placed on a par with the four other *silas*." As a Muslim, he said, "I cannot think otherwise, and I cannot be made to think otherwise." If the government insists upon this interpretation, he said, "people will nod their heads but only because they are afraid to defy power."[99]

Hamka also used his bully pulpit as chair of the Ulama Council to challenge the regime over claims to official status by members of Javanese "belief groups" who adhered to Hindu-Buddhist-influenced mystic beliefs and practices. To Hamka's chagrin, the regime had already authorized a secretariat for the groups, and they had been permitted to broadcast a program on state television called *Mimbar Kepercayaan* (Belief group pulpit). (This particularly irked Hamka because he often appeared on state television on a program titled *Mimbar Islam* [Muslim pulpit].)[100] Now the Javanists were lobbying for separate wedding ceremonies, separate burial grounds, and their own national holiday. Amid a flurry of polemical public debate, this issue came to a head in 1977 as the government considered creating a separate oath of office for followers of the belief groups, thus opening another doorway to legitimacy. When Hamka got wind of this, he wrote in protest privately to the interior minister Amir Machmud and secretly to the president himself. (Rusydi remembers seeing his father's many books strewn across the bed as he marshaled his arguments.)[101]

In his letter, Hamka argued that the belief groups now clamoring for recognition were nothing more than residual elements of what he called "Javanized

Hinduism," which dated back to Java's pre-Muslim past.[102] Adherents of these Javanist sects resisted Islam and its antifeudal teachings from the outset and led rearguard actions against it. But it was Islam that triumphed and that became Java's true religion. Islam also became the fount of our freedom, he wrote to the president. The colonial-era mass organizations that inspired and fueled our independence movement—Sarekat Islam, Muhammadiyah, and Nahdlatul Ulama—were powerfully Islamic, and all of them sprang from Java. From Islam came the spirit of *jihad*, which fired our revolutionaries. Where were the belief groups then? These sects, he said, have no religious doctrines, no holy books, and no prophets. They say they want to worship God in their own way, but there is no basis for their beliefs, only a hodgepodge of shadow-puppet stories and poems and other hoary texts and esoteric knowledge handed down from their ancestors. The government's Secretariat of Belief Groups, he noted, recognized two hundred such sects![103] How can these be recognized as a proper religion? Followers of these sects, he wrote the president, remain viscerally opposed to devout expressions of Islam. Because of this and their own vague theological underpinnings, they are easy targets for Christian conversion. Encouraging this kind of uncritical ecumenism, accepting anything at all as a legitimate religion, he said, will lead to the fragmentation of our people.[104]

We do not know Soeharto's reaction to this heartfelt jeremiad. He himself was steeped in certain esoteric Javanese mystical practices.[105] In any case, Rusydi and Hasan Basri connived to circulate the letter among members of the council, which ultimately adopted it as the body's official view on the *kebatinan* belief groups.[106] Even critics such as Mohammad Roem agreed that Hamka had confronted the president forcefully.[107] Amir Machmud backed down on the oath issue, and ultimately the regime concluded with Hamka and the council that, indeed, the mystic sects could not be equated with a formal religion; instead, they would be regarded as mere "beliefs" and handled officially under the Ministry of Culture.[108] Ulama Council insiders such as Lukman Harun attributed this acceptable outcome directly to Hamka's intervention.[109]

As new elections approached in 1977, speculation arose as to whether Hamka would join the government party, Golkar. There was pressure to do so, Rusydi tells us. The council itself contained some Golkar members but also *ulama*s affiliated with the PPP, the regime-created amalgamation of the three remaining Muslim parties. Hamka chose to stand aloof but in *Society's Banner* signaled obliquely that he would be voting with the Muslims. Like other New Order elections, this one was marked by army intimidation and, according to Vickers, by regime-linked thugs who "all over the country . . . burned down the houses of opponents or beat them into line."[110] When it was over, Hamka

again confronted Soeharto personally, as well as Soeharto's intelligence chief, General Yoga Sugama, about "healing the grave wounds" of government coercion and harassment during the campaign.[111]

In the midst of his busy life as chair of the Ulama Council, Hamka turned seventy on February 17, 1978. There was a great party at Al-Azhar Mosque, and Hamka was presented with a cake in the shape of the mosque. Hatta, Roem, Yunan Nasution, Yassin, and Natsir were all there. Fatmawati, Sukarno's first lady, cut the cake.[112] In Indonesia the seventieth birthday is celebrated as a ritual milestone and, for people of note, is often accompanied by a published volume of anecdotes, memoirs, and notes of appreciation. Hamka was thus duly feted on this occasion. Mohammad Hatta and Mohammad Natsir led Hamka's Festschrift, followed by Mohammad Roem and forty-four of his friends, colleagues, and protégés, as well as prominent historians and scholars. The book was introduced by three New Order cabinet ministers and also by Hamka's lifelong mentor and brother-in-law Sutan Mansur. The stories told span Hamka's long life. Many are highly personal and candid and, of course, affectionate. But others, essays by Western-educated historians and Muslim intellectuals, offer a critical appreciation of Hamka's multifarious career and its impact.

The historian Alfian speaks of Hamka's prolific influence as "one of only a handful of people who are widely read in the country" and his unique contributions to the history of Islamic modernism in Indonesia, including *My Father*, his biography of Haji Rasul.[113] Taufik Abdullah calls Hamka the "single most important chronicler of Muhammadiyah in West Sumatra" and reveals from documents in the colonial archives that Dutch spies already had their eyes on Hamka when he was barely twenty years old, identifying him not only as a writer of history but also as a maker of history.[114] This point is also emphasized by Deliar Noer in his long appreciative essay and by many others.[115] Nurcholish Madjid, for example, identifies the Al-Azhar Mosque as "the most influential in the country" and Hamka himself as "without doubt one of the paramount [Muslim] leaders of recent times."[116]

In the pages of his Festschrift and at his party at the mosque, Hamka was surrounded by some of his country's leading figures and prominent intellectuals. To them all he was, affectionately, Buya, or "respected leader"—Buya Hamka.[117] This was also true for the public at large, great numbers of whom read his books, listened to him on the radio, and watched him on television. To virtually everyone he was a familiar face from magazines and newspapers. (The prominent weekly magazine *Tempo* devoted two pages to his seventieth birthday.)[118] At Idul Fitri, devoted followers crammed the streets around Al-Azhar Mosque

and gathered in crowds of one hundred thousand strong to hear his sermons.[119] Hamka had achieved bigness.[120] He was Indonesia's Mr. Islam.

Several reporters who interviewed Hamka during this period noted that he was troubled by a persistent cough and that despite his ebullient spirit he appeared tired. The daily work and busy traveling weighed on him. (Just before his birthday he told a reporter how he had recently been invited to a conference in Cairo. "I went there," he said. "As soon as I came home, there was an invitation for Pakistan to address the one-hundred-year anniversary of [Muhammad] Iqbal. Got home and I was invited again, to Aceh. I went there, too. No sooner had I arrived home again than I got sick.")[121] And yet. When Hamka's first term as chair of the Ulama Council ended in the spring of 1980, he was still so engaged and so thoroughly identified as the public face of Islam in Indonesia that the council members and the authorities prevailed on him to remain in place. He was reluctant, feeling his age, says Rusydi, but he accepted.

In an investiture ceremony in May, with more than three hundred people in attendance and the president himself presiding, Hamka again spoke to the independence of the Ulama Council. He pointed out that his listeners might have noticed that the council doesn't propagandize about Panca Sila in "every conversation, seminar, speech, and religious lesson." What we would like to see—what we feel we need these days—is concrete evidence of Panca Sila in day-to-day life. From the beginning, he said, the council was designed to be a bridge between government and the people. "But I must say frankly that, under the present circumstances, there is an asymmetry in the relationship between the government and the people." The government possesses many tools of communication, he said, but it is very difficult for the people to express their needs to the government. "This is the reason," he concluded, "that the Ulama Council will more often voice the various complaints of the people, to seek the government's attention."[122]

Although Hamka traveled frequently as chair of the council, he was not heavily involved in international issues. With other Muslims, of course, he followed events in the Middle East carefully. He made a point of expressing support for the Palestinians but discouraged young Indonesians from involving themselves.[123] During his third year as chair of the council, in February 1979, the Islam-infused revolutionary movement in Iran succeeded in overthrowing Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and his authoritarian, U.S.-backed regime. The revolution's spiritual leader was an *alim*, the prominent Shia scholar Ayatollah Khomeini. The revolution attracted a lot of attention among Muslims in Indonesia and alarmed the New Order military government, for whom it evoked the specter of Darul Islam and other Islam-led movements against the

state of the not-so-distant past.[124] Hamka also had reservations. He had always opposed theocracy. And he saw in Ayatollah Khomeini someone who encouraged his followers in a personality cult, much as Sukarno had done.[125] Although he respected Shia Muslims as Muslims, he rejected as insulting to the Prophet Muhammad the Shia teachings about a future savior, or *Mahdi*, who would come to "bring justice and truth to the world."[126] This was contrary to mainstream Sunni beliefs and implied that the Prophet Muhammad had failed.

Following the capture of the American embassy in Tehran by revolutionary zealots in November 1979 and the seizure of fifty-three hostages, the Soeharto government sought to distance itself from Iran. New Order figures began giving press conferences in which they stressed the moderation of Indonesian Islam and condemned the seizure of American hostages. In one such interview, Admiral Sudomo, commander of Security and Order Operations, implicated Hamka by name as chair of the Ulama Council, saying, "Professor Hamka also condemns the occupation [of the embassy] and the hostage taking of American citizens."[127] This embarrassed Hamka, who rushed into print with a denial, saying that neither as chair of the council nor as a private person had he ever said such a thing. "Aside from whether I agree with Ayatollah Khomeini's political actions or not," he said, "it is out of the question that I would condemn any ayatollah or *ulama* who is so trusted by his followers."[128]

Privately, however, Hamka was troubled by the events in Iran.[129] When he was subsequently invited to attend a conference in Tehran in June 1980, his adjutant, Lukman Harun, approached the American embassy in Jakarta and proposed a meeting. One afternoon in May 1980, the limousine of the American ambassador Edward Masters pulled up outside Hamka's house during his regular visiting hours. Hamka was flustered. ("Should I put shoes on?" he asked Lukman.) In the meeting that followed, he agreed to prevail upon the ayatollah to release the hostages.

When Hamka arrived at the conference in early June, he was shocked to find that the Iranian revolutionaries and their shrill anti-American slogans reminded him of the Indonesian Communists in their heyday. In his own speech to the delegates, given in Arabic, he began by praising the revolution for liberating Iranians from a corrupt feudal regime. But he quickly moved to the Muslim virtue of forgiveness and chided his listeners for wallowing too long in feelings of revenge and hate instead of moving on to build a new society. Hamka's comments were received coolly, and he was denied an audience with Ayatollah Khomeini and other senior officials. At night, angry youths in military uniforms came to his room and harangued him until Rusydi shooed them away. Upon his return, Hamka spoke to reporters and revealed his personal disapproval of the wrathful path of the Iranian revolution.[130]

Just about a year later, Hamka faced a case of wrath much closer to home. In March 1981 a group calling itself Komando Jihad hijacked a Garuda Airlines plane in Sumatra and fled to Bangkok. This was Indonesia's first act of terror perpetrated in the name of Islam, although the regime harbored bitter memories of the armed Darul Islam movement of the 1950s. Hamka and other council leaders were eager to disconnect Islam from the hijacking and to reassure the government security services. Hamka used the opportunity to disassociate *jihad* from terrorism. *Jihad*, he explained, doesn't necessarily mean taking up arms. It also means "to work hard and struggle for goodness in each of our individual endeavors." In this sense, he said, "I am also a 'commando *jihad*'" as chair of the Ulama Council. As for terrorism, such as the recent hijacking, "a good Muslim would not do" such a thing![131]

In the midst of this crisis, another long-standing dispute resurfaced: the matter of Muslims and Christmas. In the early months of 1981, Hamka raised the issue in a Friday sermon at Al-Azhar Mosque. "Christmas," he reminded his listeners, "is the Christian belief commemorating the birthday of the child of God. This is what they believe." But for a Muslim to attend such a commemoration, he said, would be an act of polytheism and a violation of our most basic belief, "our belief in the Oneness of God."[132] In March the council issued a *fatwa* signed by Hamka stating that Muslims were forbidden to attend Christmas worship services.[133] The New Order government was caught off guard and furious. It immediately fired one of Hamka's senior staff members. His son Rusydi watched as Hamka protested loudly over the telephone to the secretary general of the Ministry of Religion, took responsibility for the *fatwa* himself, and, moments later, slammed down the phone.

"What did he say?" asked Rusydi.

"Orders from above," Hamka answered.[134]

Hamka was required to sign and publish a letter withdrawing the *fatwa*. He did so. But the following day he issued a second statement saying that what had been withdrawn was the distribution of the *fatwa*, not its content. That, he said defiantly, remained valid. The crisis that followed prompted the minister of religion himself to offer to resign. Instead, it was Hamka who did.

On May 18 Rusydi found his father sitting serenely at his typewriter. "I've made a decision," he said.[135] Later that day at a council senior staff meeting he read his resignation letter. In it he emphasized his belief that the Ulama Council had established its authority and could carry on. And he recounted his stand that the "Christmas *Fatwa*" was valid. With that he thanked everyone and took his leave.[136] "Some people say that the Ulama Council can't go on without Hamka at the helm," he told reporters. "But it's not true. I don't like being the center of a cult of the individual. Lots of people are capable of replacing me." It

was Hasan Basri, his faithful number two at the council, who now stepped in as interim chair.[137]

The press carried Hamka's resignation widely, and he was showered with congratulations. ("No one congratulated me when I was appointed," he wryly noted.)[138] Even his persistent critics, such as Mohammad Roem, admitted that he went out "in a blaze of glory" for standing up to the government. "He became a symbol of freedom and resistance," said Roem.[139] President Soeharto handled the event gingerly by praising the departing leader in public and soliciting his continued advice. Hamka said, simply, "It feels good to stop."[140]

Hamka's *Tafsir*

By the spring of 1981 Hamka had finished publishing his Qur'anic commentary, the *Tafsir al-Azhar*, at long last. The final volume came out in time for his seventy-third birthday. Hamka had written the first draft of this great work in prison. But it had taken him fifteen years of busy freedom to complete it to his satisfaction. While Hamka's actions as chair of the Ulama Council may have tended to exaggerate his defensive stance as a public leader of Indonesian Muslims, his *Tafsir* reveals that he remained attuned to his Great Story all the while. It was the culmination of his life's work.

To Muslims, the Qur'an is the word of God as received and transmitted in Arabic by the Prophet Muhammad in a sequence of revelations over a period of twenty-three years.[141] Muslims go to the Qur'an for the ultimate truths. It is the sacred foundation for Muslim belief. But the Qur'an, a collection of 114 *sura*s (chapters) and 6,236 *aya*s (verses) in highly poetic Arabic, is not altogether transparent.[142] To help explain it, Muslims turn to the Hadith (the reports of the Prophet), a collection of writings recounting the life and words of Muhammad. Thus, when explaining a certain passage in the Qur'an, scholars turn first to other passages of the Holy Book and then to the Hadith, weighing the explanation and implications of the one against the other while also weighing the authority of the many Hadith themselves.

Over the centuries, scholars compiled these explanations and exegeses into verse-by-verse Qur'anic commentaries, or *tafsir*s. Among the classic examples are those of Abu Ja'afar al-Tabari (839–923), Abu al-Qasim Jarullah al-Zamakhshari (1075–1144), and the Andalusian Ibn al-Arabi (1165–1240).[143] *Ulama*s have used these commentaries to support or refute competing interpretations of the true teachings, citing the arguments of earlier commentaries selectively. In them, as Walid A. Saleh writes, "one finds reflected the concerns of every generation of Muslim intellectuals."[144] As Hamka explains, the *Tafsir*

al-Kashshaf by Imam Jarullah al-Zamakhshari of the twelfth century reflects the views of the rationalist Mu'tazilah school, sometimes called "free thinkers." The *tafsir Ruh al-Ma'ani* by Al-Alusi, the nineteenth-century *mufti* of Baghdad, defends the Hanafi school of law. And so on.[145]

An important function of the commentaries was translation, since the Qur'an itself existed only in Arabic. For many centuries, in fact, *ulama*s forbade the translation of the Qur'an. But in time, especially after unauthorized translations appeared in Latin and other Western languages and the advent of the printing press, the *ulama*s loosened this prohibition and required instead that each translation be accompanied by the original Arabic text.[146] *Tafsir*s offered translations of Qur'anic verses and commentaries about them in vernacular languages. Thus they were an important part of the process by which Islam came to be understood as it expanded into ever wider and more diverse linguistic and cultural domains.

The first Qur'anic commentaries in Southeast Asia appeared sometime around the beginning of the seventeenth century.[147] Their authors wrote them in Malay, the very language that later became the basis for modern Indonesian and, of course, the language in which Hamka wrote his own *Tafsir al-Azhar*. By the end of the seventeenth century, writing in Aceh, Abd al-Ra'uf al-Singkili had completed the first full Malay-language *tafsir*, *Tarjuman al-Mustafid*, based largely on the earlier Arabic *Tafsir al-Jalalayn* of Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (1445–1505) and Jalal al-Din al-Mahalli (d. 1459). This became "the standard work of *tafsir* and translation in Malay" until the twentieth century.[148] As a rule, writes Azyumardi Azra, al-Singkili translated the Jalalayn *tafsir* "word for word," rendering it "comprehensible to his fellow Malays."[149]

Commentaries like these not only moved the Qur'an into indigenous-language discourses but also took sides in theological arguments among Muslim scholars of the times, thus placing the Qur'an and its teachings in history, that is, as Hamka often said, in a specific "place and time."[150] The famous *Tafsir al-Manar* of Rashid Rida, for example, plumbed the Qur'an and Hadith and earlier commentaries to address Islam's response to modernity and the rise of the West, reflecting the pathbreaking ideas of Muhammad Abduh.[151] Hamka approached his own *tafsir* project in the same spirit. Indeed, he said, he would call upon Rashid Rida's commentaries to help compile his own, alongside many classical scholars and one very modern one. This was the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb, a journalist and intellectual associated with the Muslim Brotherhood whose *tafsir* reached past World War II into the postcolonial atomic era.[152]

No two *tafsir*s are alike, Hamka told his readers: "Each one bears the coloring of the commentator's own personality." Hamka's would certainly reflect his

"own point of view and experience."[153] It would reflect no single school of law, or *madhhab*, he said, referring to the four Sunni legal traditions of Hanbali, Hanafi, Maliki, and Shafi'i. (Shafi'i is dominant among Indonesians.) Rather, "the *madhhab* followed by this commentator is the Madhhab Salaf [Salafi], being the school of the Prophet and his companions and of the *ulama*s who follow in his footsteps."[154] Moreover, his *tafsir* would reflect his audience, he said, which included not only the *ulama*s but also (he tellingly enumerates) university students, professors, engineers, and doctors; generals, colonels, lieutenants, captains, and majors; tycoons, importers, exporters, and middlemen; service people of all kinds; plus working folk, craftsmen, gardeners, and government workers—"alongside each of their wives."[155] To make his commentaries accessible to everyone, he said, they "wouldn't be too deep," nor would they be "too shallow."[156]

In undertaking a *tafsir* of the entire Qur'an, Hamka wrote, he was continuing the efforts of earlier Malay-language *ulama*s to convey the meaning of the Qur'an in a contemporary language for a contemporary audience.[157] For Hamka, this meant writing in modern Indonesian for modern Indonesians. In doing so—and this was his lifelong ambition—he would reveal Islam for Indonesia.

Hamka's commentaries follow a classical format, addressing each verse, or *aya*, of the Qur'an in sequence, first to last. By tradition, the Qur'an's 114 chapters, or *sura*s, are divided into clusters of thirty *juz'u*, or volumes. Hence, Hamka's *Tafsir al-Azhar* is thirty volumes long. Hamka begins each new book with an introduction that identifies it as either a Mecca-revealed *sura* or a later one revealed to Muhammad in Medina; these represent two stages in the formation of the original *umma* and the creation of an Islam-led state. He then goes on to explain the name of the *sura* and to foreshadow its contents. In the introduction to the *sura Al-Nisa'*, he explains that scholars differ as to whether the *sura* originated in Mecca or Medina and then explains why he believes it should be classified as a Medina *sura*.[158] *Al-Nisa'* means "women," he says, so the title refers to the book's many references to women. These include matters pertaining to who may marry whom, as well as to children, orphans, property, and inheritance. Characteristically, Hamka ends his introduction with a small exhortation like this one: "So, for those of us Muslims who seek to fathom religious regulations directly from the Qur'an, *sura Al-Nisa'* is among those that must be pondered thoroughly."[159]

What follows is the verse-by-verse commentary, beginning with each verse in Arabic adjacent to Hamka's rendering of the verse in Indonesian. A close look at his treatment of verse 1 of *Al-Nisa'* illustrates his approach well. Hamka's

Buya Hamka, 1970s. Courtesy of Irfan Hamka.

paraphrase of the Arabic original, rendered in English, is as follows: "All people! Be mindful of your God, who created you from one self and from that self created a wife and, from the two of them, caused men and women to proliferate. Be mindful of God, whose name you are constantly asking about, and protect the ties of kinship. Truly, God is your Protector."[160]

The first passage, "All people!" writes Hamka, reminds us that God speaks to everyone regardless of "country or continent, ethnicity or skin color." The next passage, "Be mindful of your God, who created you from one self," reminds us of two core teachings of Islam: "Allah is one, and humanity is also one!"[161] Having reaffirmed these fundamentals, Hamka resumes: "and from that self created a wife." Readers will no doubt associate this passage with Adam and Hawa (Eve), he writes, since the majority of earlier commentators have told us so; some, moreover, have written that Hawa was created from Adam's rib and some even that she was created from Adam's lower left rib. This has become the accepted tradition. "Yet," he goes on, in the verse itself, "it is not mentioned that this 'one self' was Adam and that the wife or partner created for him was Hawa. And there is no mention of the rib whatsoever."[162] So where do these beliefs come from? They come from the words of the Prophet as recorded in a number of authoritative Hadith, including the compilations of al-Bukhari and Muslim and those by several companions of the Prophet.[163]

May we question these accounts? Hamka then asks. Yes, "because in Islam the door of *ijtihad* is never closed."[164] As Rashid Rida has explained in his *Tafsir al-Manar*, one should not be surprised at disagreements over the interpretation of this verse: the Qur'an itself is vague, and authoritative Hadith "can be interpreted differently."[165] Hamka then mentions that scholars have traced the Adam and Hawa story to the book of Genesis from the Hebrew Torah and beyond—here he cites Will Durant—to creation stories circulating in ancient Mesopotamia and Babylon. Perhaps this is the true source of the story and not the Prophet Muhammad. Moreover, modern archaeologists have uncovered the fossil remains of very early human beings in China and even on Java, and there is Charles Darwin's theory to consider.[166] And, he writes, there have long been Muslims—including Sufis led by Ibn al-'Arabi and also certain Shia *imams*—who believe that "before our grandfather Adam, there had already been thousands, even millions, of Adams."[167]

Among modern *ijtihad*-practicing Muslims, he says, we can be open to these alternative interpretations of Adam and Hawa because the teachings are not *certain*, as they must be for our core beliefs. However, he goes on, if there were a clear and unambiguous statement in the Qur'an or in the authoritative Hadith that Adam and Hawa were the first man and first woman and that

Hawa was created from Adam's rib, then "even though the whole world said no," we would hold tight to that belief.[168]

Hamka now turns to the phrase "who created you from one self" and elaborates on the theme of humanity's common character despite differences in place of origin, color, sex, and the relative modernity or backwardness of individual societies. Even the physical difference between men and women is small, he says (and digresses briefly to mention sex-change operations and transvestites, or "boy-girls").[169] From this small difference, however, arose the sex drive, and this in turn has populated the world, hence the phrase "and, from the two of them, [God] caused men and women to proliferate." The following phrase reflects God's concern, as "men and women" multiplied in the millions, that they remain aware of and preserve the oneness of the human community: "Be mindful of Allah, whose name you are constantly asking about, and protect the ties of kinship." When people became sentient and lived in communities, Hamka explains, they naturally wondered about the Great Creator or God, and this became a day-to-day topic of conversation and questioning, as reflected in this verse.[170]

Hamka then uses the motif of questioning to shift to the phrase "and protect the ties of kinship." When people meet each other for the first time, he says, they immediately question each other about their families, meaning their kinfolk or blood relations. This reflects a human longing for love and affection, or belonging. Arabs do this, and so do Indonesians. Think of the Minangkabaus, who upon meeting each other in the diaspora attempt quickly to establish any possible kinship tie. Bataks will inquire about each other's *marga*, or clan. And when Indonesians are far away in Europe, they feel kinship with each other even though "one is from Aceh and the other from Ternate." This feeling of human kinship, of belonging to a single blood lineage, Hamka writes, "is the basis for peace and humanitarianism in Islam."[171] And all the more so because "truly, God is your Protector."

Finally, Hamka turns to history and reminds his readers that this particular verse was transmitted to the Prophet in Medina at a time when the first true Muslim community was forming amid various Arab tribes, as well as Jews and others from Rome, Africa, and Iran. He refers to another verse also from Medina in which God is said to create "many ethnicities and tribes, so that you will recognize one another."[172] This verse has a similar import, he says, to show how "devotion to God" united the disparate and previously warring tribes and groups of Arabia and created among them a sense of shared humanity. "In short, in the earliest days [of Islam] the ultimate goal of this humanitarian religion was already visible."[173]

Hamka's discussion of the first verse of *Al-Nisa'* covers a full nine pages. In them he explains the verse in light of past commentaries, hallowed Hadith, and other passages from the Qur'an itself. He confronts differences of interpretation, invokes *ijtihad* to accommodate them, and explains why Muslims need not accept the classical story of Adam and Hawa as literally true. He alludes to Western scholarship and science, showing how they are not incompatible with the content of the verse. He historicizes the verse by relating it to particular moments in the early formation of the first Muslim community in Arabia. He illustrates the meaning of the verse using Indonesian examples (implicitly linking Indonesians to Arabs and to other Muslims). He connects the fundamental teaching of monotheism, or oneness, to the human community at large and to the creation of coherent flesh-and-blood human societies. He concludes by saying, "With this basis, Muslim people moved forward until they created a state."[174] This alludes to the state founded by Muhammad at Medina, but it also implies the other new state on his readers' minds: Indonesia. In one short lesson built upon a single verse of the Qur'an, Hamka has masterfully invoked several guiding themes of his Great Story.

This small example illustrates Hamka's attempt in his commentaries to accommodate a variety of theological perspectives. "Islam for Indonesia" required inclusiveness. Hamka brings many of the great thinkers of Islam into his discursive lessons, from al-Ghazali, to Ibn Rushd, to Ibn Taymiya, to twentieth-century figures such as Rashid Rida and Sayyid Qutb. Even so, in commenting upon every verse of the Qur'an, Hamka invariably reveals his own theological proclivities, as he said he would. We will explore this by examining Hamka's treatment of certain bellwether issues in relation to classical schools of Islamic theology and also to Qutb's influential modern *tafsir*, *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*.

In his extensive analysis of Hamka's *Tafsir al-Azhar*, M. Yunan Yusuf begins by identifying two competing streams of thought in Islamic theology.[175] The rationalist stream is identified with the eighth-century Mu'tazilah school of Baghdad and emphasizes human agency in thought and action and the key role of reason in understanding God and God's creation. The traditionalist stream is identified with the tenth-century Ash'ariyya school and emphasizes God's absolute power over human agency; it minimizes human reason as a pathway to knowing God.[176] Yusuf places Hamka's *Tafsir* on a spectrum between these two poles.[177]

Mu'tazilah rationalists generally hold that people can discern the existence of God and of good and evil through reason alone. They also emphasize the human responsibility to thank God and to lead moral lives by "commanding the good and prohibiting the evil."[178] God's revelation through the prophets

and the Qur'an confirms this and instructs believers *how* to thank God and to perfect themselves as moral beings. Rationalists believe strongly in free will, that people choose paths of good and evil, belief and nonbelief; their fates are not predestined. And because God has granted free will and the gift of rationality to humans, God's power is actually limited. It is also limited by God's promises to be always just and to reward the good and punish the evil on the Day of Judgment. To rationalists, writes Yusuf, it is inconceivable that God will act cruelly or unjustly. Rationalists tend to interpret metaphorically passages in the Qur'an and Hadith in which God is described as having human hands and a face and as sitting upon a throne, rejecting the idea that God has human features. Finally, rationalists hold that faith in God requires more than belief in one's heart; it also requires commensurate speech and action.

Yusuf contrasts this profile with that of Ash'ariyya-oriented traditionalists. They hold that without divine revelation through the prophets and scriptures people would know nothing of God, or of good and evil, or how to lead moral lives. Moreover, because God's power is absolute, people's actions and choices in life are in fact predestined by God; a person may only do what God has determined he or she will do. Hence, fate is all. To traditionalists, there are no limits to God's power, including the "ethical" limits understood by the rationalists. To them, God has no obligations to humans. God may do as God pleases with God's creation. And when the scriptures say that God has hands and eyes and a face, it means that God actually has hands and eyes and a face—even though we may understand that the hands and eyes of God will not be the same as the hands and eyes of humans. Finally, traditionalists are inclined to understand faith in terms of pious belief rather than belief combined with commensurate words and deeds.[179]

Behind these representations lie layer upon layer of argumentation, as Muslim theologians have confronted the complexities of these questions over the centuries. This becomes clear in Hamka's *tafsir* as he attempts to square his robust faith in human reason and agency with his equally robust defense of Islam's fundamental teachings. Overall, writes Yusuf, Hamka tends strongly in the rationalist direction—as one might expect of a self-declared modernist and reformer. As he does so, however, he eschews the Mu'tazilah label and describes himself instead as an *alim* of the Sunni mainstream, or Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah.[180]

Hamka's treatment of "reason versus revelation" illustrates this accommodation. Reason, of course, and the beauty of human thought—a gift from God—were major themes in Hamka's writing. Thinking separates humans from animals and gives them the capacity to apprehend the existence of God,

to discern right from wrong, and to realize that there was "more to life than eating, drinking, and having sex."[181] God gave people the power of thought so that they could advance with the times. Humans should never stop searching for new knowledge. In the *sura Al-Isra'*, says Hamka, Allah explicitly forbids us from doing so: "Do not follow blindly what you have no knowledge of."[182] In explicating this for Indonesian readers, Hamka invokes Mr. Follow, who trundles passively in the steps of "his ancestors out of habit or because of customs and accepted traditions." All of this, he says, leads people "to abandon their own judgment."[183]

So far, this interpretation comports exactly with a rationalist perspective, Yusuf tells us. But when addressing other aspects of the reason-versus-revelation question, Hamka takes a more conservative position. Before God's revelation, Hamka explains, people could discern the existence of God but not the character of God—that God is loving, generous, compassionate, and just. People needed to learn from revelation to be thankful to God and to know right from wrong as universal values. This knowledge, Hamka says, is beyond reason.[184]

In his treatment of "free will and predestination," Hamka cites Qur'anic verses to show that God has empowered people to make free choices. One example, from *sura Al-Kahf*, is "The truth has come from your God. Because of this, whoever wishes to do so, believes. And whoever wishes not to is an unbeliever."[185] Hamka comments, "You can weigh and unlock the truth *yourself*."[186] *Sura Al-Insan* reads, "Truly, we have shown him the way."[187] Hamka comments that some people will take it, others will not.[188] Thus, on the question of predestination (Is one predestined for heaven or hell?), Hamka is clear that one is not.

Yet people are not wholly free. As Hamka stressed in his *Lessons* of the 1950s, God has created the world and nature and the laws of nature, the Sunnatullah, within which people must live. The laws that govern the natural world are immutable and perfect. Here Hamka invokes a powerful image familiar to wet-rice-growing Indonesians: water will always flow downhill, and "as empty places are filled, the stream [of water] goes on and on and on, passing through ever lower places as it moves toward the sea."[189] The same laws of nature govern the physical stages of a person's life from birth to death; these are inescapable. It is these immutable laws, the Sunnatullah, that are predestined, writes Hamka, not the choices that humans make within them.[190] Overall, this comports with a rationalist perspective.

But when it comes to the miracles of the prophets, Hamka wavers because God's recorded miracles appear to violate the laws of nature and, in doing so, suggest that the Sunnatullah is not inviolate after all. They prove, say the

traditionalists, that God's power is wholly unrestrained—a view Hamka associates with the great Muslim scholar al-Ghazali. Hamka accepts the miracles as recorded in the scriptures as actual events, not metaphors. He concludes that, in light of the level of human culture at the time, they were necessary to convince people that the prophets were truly messengers from God. Did they occur, as rationalists such as Ibn Rushd understood them, within the laws of nature, albeit in ways that we do not understand? Hamka doesn't say. But he does caution his readers against embracing al-Ghazali's viewpoint. Doing so led Muslims over the centuries to embrace legions of bogus miracle stories, a point he made strongly in his *Lessons* of the mid-1950s. This word of caution, concludes Yusuf, reveals Hamka's fundamentally rationalist inclinations.[191]

On most of the other bellwether theological issues, Hamka's *Tafsir al-Azhar* sides clearly with the rationalists. While clinging to the authority of the scriptures and claiming the Sunni mainstream, Hamka led his readers boldly in a rationalist direction, urging them to face their modern lives by deploying reason and human initiative.[192]

In passages where he addresses the attributes of God, Hamka resorts directly to the Mu'tazilah *tafsir* of Jarullah al-Zamakhshari, *Tafsir al-Kashshaf*, to explain how words such as "hands" and "face" and "eyes" can be interpreted metaphorically. We are all familiar, he writes, with expressions such as "so-and-so's hands are tied" and "so-and-so is open handed."[193] We know immediately not to interpret such expressions literally. The same is true of the Qur'anic passage in *sura Ta Ha* where God is depicted "established on a throne" and the one in *Al-Zumar* where, on the Day of Judgment, "all the heavens revolve in God's right hand."[194] Metaphors like these, Hamka writes, are provided to help us understand things that are beyond our grasp and that relate "to the truth of God's absolute power, which is not bound by any one shape and has no limits."[195]

The same applies to passages in the Qur'an in which, at the End, believers are said to "see the face of God."[196] In treating the meaning of this passage, Hamka expresses frustration over the endless debates between rationalists and their theological opponents about how, exactly, believers will see God and what, exactly, they will see. Seeking a "middle path," he turns to the modern *tafsir* of Egyptian Sayyid Qutb, *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*. Qutb asserts that Muslim believers who have embraced God's promise to see God are filled with such overwhelming radiant happiness that they do not think to ask about such things. Arguments about them are "useless."[197]

Of far greater concern to Hamka were arguments about the true nature of faith. Faith is not merely believing in one's heart; it is also words and deeds and

understanding.[198] This had been a foundation of Hamka's public teaching since the 1930s, when his famous *Modern Sufism* asserted that God's teachings were meant to be lived out in the real world and not squandered in self-indulgent lives of isolated meditation or arid devotionalism. "How many Muslims are there," he asks while commenting on *sura Al-Hujurat*, "who profess the creed, say their prayers, fast, and make the pilgrimage to Mecca" and yet do not live out their "Islamness" in their daily lives?[199] People of faith are called upon to walk the "road of Allah," indeed, to exert themselves passionately along it. Those who do not have not yet drawn their stated beliefs into their hearts.[200]

The issue of walking the "road of Allah" was one about which Hamka and Sayyid Qutb were in full agreement. True faith required deeds. Qutb was a contemporary of Hamka's and a leading intellectual of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood until his execution in 1966. Hamka admired his Qur'anic commentaries and writes in the introduction to his own *tafsir* that they "influenced me greatly."[201] Given the subsequent impact of Qutb's ideas among radical Islamists around the world and in Indonesia, it is interesting to observe just *how* greatly they actually influenced Hamka. Judging from his *Tafsir al-Azhar* and other writings, the answer is very little.

A core theme in Sayyid Qutb's commentaries is *jahiliyyah*, referring to the ignorance that prevailed before God's revelation and implying human life unilluminated by God's truth and undisciplined by God's law, the *shari'a*. In Qutb's commentaries (and other later writings, particularly his prison book *Milestones*), *jahiliyyah* stands in contrast to *hakimiyyat allah*, or the absolute sovereignty of God, a condition that implies the full undiluted application of the *shari'a*.[202] Qutb thus applied *jahiliyyah* not only to pre-Islamic and non-Islamic societies but also to contemporary Muslim societies that dwell beyond the full application of Islamic law, namely, to all societies on earth. This provocative teaching lies behind Qutb's interpretation of other key concepts of Islamic theology.[203]

Hamka did not embrace Qutb's concept of *jahiliyyah* or most of Qutb's other core teachings. But he did at times embrace some of Qutb's anger over threats to Islam. Here and there in his *Tafsir* he mirrors Qutb's language in depicting Jews and Christians. In commenting on *sura Al-Baqara*, for example, he writes that both "the Jews with their Zionism" and "the capitalist states with their Christianism . . . have joined together to become one in order to carry out a modern Crusades, attacking Arabs not because they are Arabs but because they are Muslim."[204] This passage clearly reflects the polemical nature of the times, including the 1967 Arab-Israeli War in Palestine and also the rise in Christian proselytization under the New Order in Indonesia, events that tested

Hamka's belief in religious tolerance. Recall his famous Christmas *fatwa* and its apparently anti-Christian message.[205] Generally speaking, however, Hamka did not speak of a war or clash pitting Islam against Christianity, Judaism, Communism, and all others "who stand in the way of Islam's progress," as Qutb did.[206] Rather, he spoke of the clash between Communism on one side and Islam *and other religions* on the other.[207] He took pains to interpret Qur'anic passages implicating Jews and Christians as enemies of Islam in the context of specific historical events when the early Muslim community was a risk—rather than universally, as Qutb did.[208] He emphasized Islam's kinship with Judaism and Christianity, saying, "The religion brought by all prophets from Adam through Muhammad, including Moses and Jesus, is not other than Islam. They called mankind to Islam, which is submission and obedience to God alone."[209]

In the same spirit, Hamka concludes in response to passages in *sura Al-Baqara* that all people who believe sincerely in one God, the final judgment, and the life hereafter will be welcomed by God on the Last Day, not exclusively people who call themselves Muslim.[210] Indeed, he often adopted an ecumenical tone regarding "people of religion," who, he said, "should work together to create peace through a [common] basic belief in God and the hereafter and prove it with good deeds, not destructive ones." His Christmas *fatwa* did not forbid Muslims from celebrating with Christians, only from participating in Christian acts of worship.[211] "The human community in reality is one community," he said. "Religions, in actuality, are one."[212]

All of this stands in contrast to Qutb's harsher renderings, in which Jews and Christians are clear unbelievers and in which "the vast gathering of human demons, [Christian] crusaders, Zionists, pagans, Communists, who differ among themselves, . . . join together against Islam in order to crush the vanguards of the movements for Islamic rebirth throughout the earth."[213]

Hamka's rejection of Qutb's black-or-white view of the world is also reflected in his treatment of *jihad*. In Qutb's reading of the Qur'an, *jihad* represents "total rebellion against all laws on the earth that are purely human."[214] It is the "appropriate action to remove all physical and material obstacles that try to impede [Islam's] efforts to liberate mankind from submission to anyone other than God."[215] The command "to fight against all the polytheists" was God's final revelation on the subject of *jihad* and rendered moot earlier passages that emphasized *jihad* as self-defense or as a purely spiritual endeavor.[216] These latter interpretations were much emphasized by Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida in *Tafsir al-Manar* and by other modernists.[217] Hamka also embraced them. He takes pains in his *Tafsir* to emphasize that not all Muslims are

called to fight; some are called to improve themselves and "deepen their religious knowledge."[218] Elsewhere he assures readers that up till now there has never been any intention in Islam of raising war against Jews and Christians.[219] This is exactly the kind of thinking that by the 1960s Sayyid Qutb had rejected.

In other matters as well, Hamka steers away from Qutb's totalistic interpretations in favor of other modernist readings.[220] Qutb believed, for example, that the revelation of Islam in the Qur'an was perfect. It required no additions or adaptations "to suit local conditions." The law of the Qur'an, he wrote, is to be "implemented by all communities for the rest of time."[221] Hamka, in contrast, often spoke of the importance of applying *ijtihad* to adapt Islam to specific "places and times." Aside from laws governing obligatory acts of worship (*'ibadat*), he understood the *shari'a* as an evolving body of law that reflected the insights of each new generation of Islamic scholars and jurists.[222] As for gender relations, Qutb declared that in providing four wives for each man (and other protocols), the Qur'an has perfectly ordered family life in "all areas and all generations."[223] Hamka's reading of similar passages emphasizes the Qur'an's teaching on fairness to women and thus the view that although polygamy is permitted, monogamy is best. If a man thinks about being fair to his wife, he writes, and about the responsibility of raising and supporting his children, "he won't marry again until, at last, old age is safely achieved, until [he has] witnessed his children become adults, and until the grave-digger's spade has separated him from his first wife."[224] This is what Hamka taught and practiced his entire life.

Finally, Hamka is far more likely in his *Tafsir* to call upon Western learning, which Qutb considered a source of impurity.[225] In discussing sex and gender relations in the passage quoted above, for example, Hamka brings in Freud, Jung, and Adler.[226] This is common. We have noted in his account of the first passage in *sura Al-Nisa'* how, in his discussion of Adam and Hawa, he refers to Darwin, archaeologists, and Will Durant (not to mention Shia mystics) to explicate the passage. Nothing like this is to be found in Sayyid Qutb's commentary on the same passage, which feels clinical by comparison.

This is true generally. Whereas Sayyid Qutb increasingly saw Islam in terms of clean lines and boundaries that separated the True from all the rest, Hamka's *Tafsir* embodies a more complex and individualized reading in which Islam is both wholly universal and at the same time intensely local. Indeed, it is Islam for Indonesia.[227] Sayyid Qutb rejected modern nationalism altogether and, in his later writing, shifted his focus from Egypt to the achievement of God's absolute sovereignty in the entire world.[228] Hamka does speak of the dangers of nationalism, namely, of equating the nation with God; at one point

he even uses the Qutb-like expression "*jahiliyyah* nationalism."[229] Moreover, he frequently reminds his readers that Islam itself is universal and that, as Muslims, they are part of all humanity. Yet Hamka's love for Indonesia pervades the *Tafsir*. He addresses his readers *as Indonesians*. To him, Indonesia—with its complex and varied religious traditions and hybridities—is not the *jahiliyyah* that Qutb speaks of but a beloved vessel (*wadah*) that Islam may ultimately fill.[230]

Consequently, Indonesia is ever present in Hamka's *Tafsir al-Azhar*. In commenting on this verse or that, Hamka often reminds his readers of Indonesia's place in the wider world of Islam, of the long process through which the people of the archipelago received and embraced the revelations of Muhammad, and of the role of Islam in resisting Dutch colonialism and in creating a modern Indonesian nation. The verse in *Al-Zumar* that reads "These are the ones God has guided, these are the people of understanding," he says, brings to mind the leaders of Indonesia's great Muslim mass organizations of the early twentieth century, Cokroaminoto of Sarekat Islam and Mas Mansur of Muhammadiyah. These men, he says, mentored Sukarno himself, who joined Muhammadiyah when he was exiled by the Dutch to Bengkulu. Mohammad Hatta and Ki Hajar Dewantara are also among those "God has guided."[231]

Similarly, a passage from *Al-Baqara* leads Hamka to General Sudirman, the devout Muslim general who built Indonesia's revolutionary army, and to the passionate youths who fought the Dutch armed only with sharpened bamboo spears.[232] Soon, discussing a passage from *Al-Nisa'* in which Jesus is raised by God "up to Himself," Hamka thinks of General Abdul Haris Nasution, who was "raised" from the danger of being murdered by Communists in September 1965.[233] Hamka's own father and mentors also appear. Likewise, important events in Indonesian history are nested in the larger history of Islam and the world, events such as colonialism and the Indonesian revolution and, especially, the culture wars of the 1950s and 1960s and the country's narrow escape from Communism in 1965.

Hamka repeatedly invokes the threat posed by Communism in his *Tafsir* and the role of Islam in defeating it. In addressing the passage from *sura Luqman* that speaks of "the sort of person who pays for distracting tales [or "word games," in Hamka's translation], intending, without any knowledge, to lead others from God's way and to hold it up to ridicule," Hamka raises the example of political slogans of the Sukarno era such as Nasakom (Nationalism, Religion, and Communism) and other Communist-influenced propaganda.[234] He reminds readers that Communism teaches that religion is the "opium of the masses" and goes on to recall Indonesia's recent power struggle, the "cruel and

horrifying killings," and, finally, how "the religious community took measures itself to sweep the Communists clean."[235] Elsewhere, commenting on the Qur'an's teachings about income and property, he reminds readers that in Indonesia Communism took root easily in areas where "Islam was only a name" and that it was most efficiently annihilated "in areas where Islam was strong."[236]

But Hamka also situates his *Tafsir al-Azhar* in Indonesia in more everyday ways. There are lots of Indonesian place-names, poems, and expressions, including the familiar Indonesian rendering of "to eat your heart out."[237] There are references to familiar local animals such as water buffalo and the Bengal cattle common to Java and to Sumatran camphor and Makassarese incense. He speaks of Indonesian heirlooms such as kris and of royal titles unique to the archipelago: Datuk, Tan Sri, Tun, Pangerang, and so on.[238] When speaking of forbidden homosexuality—while commenting on *sura Al-Naml* and the story of Lut (Lot) in Sodom—he tells readers that not far from the Al-Azhar Mosque and his own home, "after ten at night, the *banci-banci*, men dressed as women, run wild in full view of passersby."[239] Likewise, when discussing what is appropriate for Indonesian Muslim women to wear and not to wear (referring to passages on modesty in *sura Al-Nur*), he writes that it is not only in America and the West and in foreign films that women wear "you-can-see" dresses, a phrase he renders always in English.[240] "The Javanese *kebaya*," he writes, "which exposes a part of the breasts (which are not covered by a shawl), is also 'you-can-see' clothing, according to Islam." And so are certain traditional Minangkabau outfits that are cut so tightly that the body appears like a "coiling snake." But don't go too far, he says. Where modesty is concerned, Islam teaches a "middle path," and Indonesians are right to reject the extreme forms of purdah practiced in other Muslim societies.[241]

Of course, the strongest distinctively Indonesian element in Hamka's *Tafsir* is Hamka's own voice. Like almost all of Hamka's writing, the *Tafsir al-Azhar* is personal and full of "I-remember-the-time" stories. Thus we hear of his trips to Malaya and to Sarawak and to other sites in Indonesia and abroad. He recalls his trip to the United States and writes of visiting a slaughterhouse in Ann Arbor and of being offered a woman by a hotel bellboy in Denver.[242] He recalls driving across Arabia in an air-conditioned car while on the hajj in 1968 with his wife, Siti Raham, and son Irfan, and commemorating Indonesia's war dead in Surabaya, where a miraculous soft rain reminded him of the passage in *Al-Dukhan* saying, "Neither heavens nor earth shed a tear for them."[243] More than once he is riding in a boat in rough seas between one island and another, invoking the passage in *Yunus*, "It is He who enables you to travel on land and sea until, when you are sailing on ships and rejoicing in the favoring

wind, a storm arrives; waves come at those on board from all sides and they feel there is no escape. Then they pray to God."[244]

Hamka tells readers of the *Tafsir* that he has been many times spared catastrophe. He is eight years old, and an invisible hand pulls him away from a bare electric cable that he recklessly reaches out for.[245] Now he is in his thirties, in Medan at the helm of *Society's Compass*, defying the Dutch Controleur who threatens him with exile to Boven Digul.[246] Now again he is under arrest in the 1960s, and a prison guard is whispering in his ear that the electric shock machine is being readied for him.[247] (Hamka often brings up his years in political detention, telling his readers again how many times he recited the entire Qur'an and how often he prayed.[248])

Most personal of all are the dreams. As we have seen, Hamka believed that dreams sometimes carried messages from God. When he was being held in detention in the hospital, for example, he heard in a dream that he would be there for seventeen months—exactly true, he says![249] In a passage in the *Tafsir* titled "Memories for My Grandchildren," in the section about the story of Yusuf (Joseph), Hamka confides that as a boy he dreamed of meeting the Prophet himself and that in his dream Muhammad was wearing a blue robe just like the one his own father wore. He goes on in the same passage to describe dreaming of sex as a seventeen-year-old boy and of being in the full flush of youthful lust. One night in Yogyakarta, as he dreamed again of having sex, he saw that the woman's vulva had teeth. He felt certain, he writes, that if he entered her, his "penis would be bitten off. I awoke with a start." This dream, he says, was a warning against adultery and fornication (*zina*) and the disease of syphilis. Because of it, he writes, "I have never in my whole life slipped into the ditch of this great sin," adding (Hamka was now well into his sixties), "and let's hope this continues to be true."[250]

The *Tafsir al-Azhar* was Hamka's final iteration of his Great Story. In it, modern Indonesia is thoroughly embedded in the global society of Islam and its history. Islam's story is Indonesia's story. And it is Hamka's story, too.

Rusydi writes that for his father, finishing the *Tafsir* brought his whole life to closure. He noted that Hamka was strangely disengaged at the party celebrating the publication of the final volume in February 1981. In his speech for the occasion, he spoke openly of his "remaining days." Hamka now moved about tentatively, tapping his ever-present cane lightly on the floor as he walked. Rusydi writes tenderly that "sometimes I myself became a second cane to guide his steps."[251]

Not long afterward, in May, the Christmas *fatwa* crisis led to Hamka's resignation as chair of the Ulama Council. His health rapidly declined. He had long suffered from diabetes. He now had heart problems, too. In July Rusydi learned that his father had been concealing just how serious they were. "So you had a heart attack six months ago?" he asked him in consternation. Hamka simply smiled and began reading the Qur'an, a family signal that the conversation was over.[252]

Hamka was now largely confined to his room at home, although he still enjoyed being driven about the city from time to time. On July 17 he had a massive heart attack and was rushed into the intensive care unit of Jakarta's Pertamina Hospital. Rusydi gathered the family. During the next few days, as Hamka weakened and rallied and weakened again, he was surrounded by his children and grandchildren and other family members and friends. His older sister, Fatimah, who had bitten him as a boy when he neglected his Qur'an lessons, stood with the others and prayed at his bedside. He faded in and out of consciousness, whispering "Allah, Allah." Hamka had never learned to type with more than four fingers. Over the years he had developed the nervous habit of tapping his fingers on the tops of tables, the arms of chairs, and (to Siti Raham's great exasperation) dinner plates—as though he were typing. Rusydi describes that in his father's final moments his fingers never stopped typing.[253]

On Friday morning, July 24, doctors disconnected the life support equipment, and as his loved ones chanted "*lā 'ilāha 'illā-llāh*" (There is no god but God), says Rusydi, "Buya's breathing slowly stopped." Mohammad Natsir, Hamka's longtime friend and fellow man of the Alam, uttered a spontaneous final prayer, and everyone said "Amen."[254]

"We Have Lost a Great Ulama," read the front-page headline in *Berita Buana*. It was typical. Both the president and the vice president prayed by Hamka's bier at the house on Raden Patah Street, and tens of thousands of mourners—"a sea of humanity"—gathered at the mosque and accompanied his body to its resting place, just as they had for Ibn Taymiya, and just as Hamka had dreamed they would for him, too.[255]

Conclusion

As a young man rising in the Dutch Indies, Hamka had indulged in fantasies of personal ambition and fame. He dreamed of becoming a great literary lion, a *pujangga*, for his new country. "I will be Hamka of Indonesia," he wrote in the dawning years of independence. But the power struggles and bitter realities of Indonesia's early years of freedom made a more serious man of him and led him to focus ever more intently on a single vocation. This was the propagation of his Great Story, in which Indonesia, a modern nation, would cohere around the values and teachings of Islam. He did this passionately as a writer, an *imam*, a vocal public figure, and the founding chair of Indonesia's national Ulama Council.

To be sure, Hamka's Great Story was not the only story. There were other transition narratives—as Dipesh Chakrabarty has called them—that described the archipelago's transformation from its indigenous forms through colonialism to the nation. Hamka's Islam-centered version stood in competition with others that privileged a Java-centric view of history or that spoke in terms of "feudalism to imperialism to capitalism" or "development and modernization" to explain Indonesia's formation and advance to modernity.[1] As Jean Gelman Taylor has written, "There is no single story or history," there are only "Indonesian histories."[2]

Yet for millions of Indonesians, Hamka's Great Story was a compelling one that, in Robert Berkhofer's words, seemed "to make sense of the grand sweep of history and illuminate human destiny itself."[3] In his deft hands, the wisdom of the ancients, the revelation of the Prophet Muhammad, the ideas of al-Ghazali, Ibn Rushd, and Muhammad Abduh, and the surge of historical forces that brought the Dutch and modern machines, railroads, and harbor works to Sumatra and Java and the entire Malay Archipelago—all of this was connected to the modern renewal of Islam in the Indies and to nationalism and the creation of Indonesia, as well as to Hamka's own life, that of his father, and

those of Zainuddin and Hayati and of Hamka's millions of readers. In the culmination of Hamka's Great Story, Indonesia itself—"our country"—would be filled and made strong and humane by Islam and its community of believers. Hamka had laid out this vision in the 1930s, and he continued to elaborate it until his final days.

❧

Already an anomaly in his own generation as a self-educated member of the intelligentsia, Hamka became even more so as a new generation rose beneath him. It included rising young intellectuals such as Abdurrahman Wahid of Nahdlatul Ulama, educated in Egypt and Iraq, as well as the graduates of Indonesia's own new universities and Islamic institutes. By the time Hamka led the Ulama Council in the 1970s, several of these young thinkers had Western doctorates in history, theology, and Islamic studies. To the English-speaking graduates of McGill, Cornell, and the Universities of Wisconsin and Chicago, Hamka must have seemed like a throwback, a blustery old-timer who couldn't keep up with the new theories and sophisticated intellectual tools they now brought to bear on thinking about Islam and society.[4]

In an essay published shortly after Hamka's death, Abdurrahman Wahid, thirty-seven years his junior, assessed his achievements bluntly. As a fiction writer, he said, Hamka was no match for Dostoyevsky or Hemingway. (Like Hamka, Wahid was not above showing off.)[5] Hamka's lack of formal education and Western languages, Wahid said, meant that his undeniably broad knowledge was unsystematic and lacked analytical depth. As a historian he was an amateur and wholly dependent on Arabic sources. And despite his contributions to popular religious knowledge, especially his groundbreaking *Modern Sufism* and his "monumental" *Tafsir*, he did not truly excel in any single field of religious knowledge. Indeed, Wahid declared, there was "nothing special about Hamka" as a man of learning and culture.[6]

Yet, said Wahid, Hamka had unquestionably earned the stature of a "national *ulama*."[7] This was due to his superior skills as a communicator and his lifelong endeavor to "open Islam to modern times." His radio lessons and his lectures, books, and articles appealed to all classes and groups. He led a mosque where Muslims of all kinds "were proud to pray." And, unlike many modernists, "he didn't antagonize traditionalists." As a consequence of Hamka's unique skills and lifelong endeavors, Wahid concluded, "the orientation of a whole generation had been shaped *by a single man.*"[8]

Other young intellectuals had cut their teeth on Hamka's books as youths or had been active at his mosque or in student organizations that he fostered. They held him in affection and esteem, even when he sometimes exasperated

them. Hamka clashed with Nurcholish Madjid, the leading young intellectual among the young modernists, or neomodernists, over the vexing question of secularism, for example.[9] Yet Madjid spoke admirably of Hamka for propagating a thinking person's Islam that drew well-educated and professional Indonesians into the faith and for leading the country's first modern mosque. As an *ulama* and *imam*, Hamka was unequaled in Indonesian history, Madjid wrote.[10] Dawam Rahardjo, another influential neomodernist, credited Hamka with reorienting Indonesian Islam away from legalism and toward morality, character, and spirituality and with rehabilitating Sufism as part of Indonesia's religious renewal. Hamka's overarching achievement, he said, was making Islam at home in Indonesia, indigenizing it so that it "became a religion that was easy to understand and accept among Indonesians." In doing so, he had created a "frame of reference for the younger generation to reinvigorate the spirit of Islam in modern times."[11] It is clear that what Rahardjo means by "frame of reference" is, in fact, Hamka's Great Story.

By the time Rahardjo wrote these words in 1993, the impact of the *dakwah* renewal movement was becoming clear. New mosques and prayerhouses were proliferating throughout Indonesia. Women who had rarely done so before had begun to adopt the hair-covering *jilbab* in conspicuous numbers.[12] Saying "assalamu 'alaikum" (Peace be with you, in Arabic), a self-consciously Muslim greeting, was becoming fashionable. At schools and universities, young people engaged earnestly in off-hours Muslim study groups. (By the 1990s, writes Asna Husin, "the circulation of Islamic books reached the highest point in Indonesian history."[13]) Rising numbers of once-lax observers were pausing for daily prayers at their offices and workplaces. The growth of orthodox Islam—often called *santri* Islam—was penetrating even the once-closed world of the Javanists.[14] Robert Hefner remarked as early as 1987 that "Javanist initiatives aimed at creating a mass-based and explicitly non-Islamic 'Javanese' religion have all but ceased."[15] (Hamka would have been smiling.) A remarkable sea change was under way.

It would be an exaggeration to assert that the revivalist *dakwah* efforts of Hamka and other like-minded Indonesian Muslims of the 1950s and 1960s were solely responsible for this remarkable surge.[16] Also involved were initiatives by the New Order itself to promote orthodox Islam through employees of the Ministry of Religion, especially, writes Hefner, "in areas regarded as weakly committed to Islam."[17] Even more significantly, a broad wave of Islamic renewal was occurring across the Muslim world at the same time.

Rising amid this wave of renewal was an angrier body of ideas that saw Islam's place in the world in more exclusive terms. Often called Islamist, these Wahhabi-influenced ideas were catalyzed by the provocative writings of Sayyid

Qutb in Egypt and Abul A'la al-Mawdudi in Pakistan and by traumatizing historical events, including the 1967 Arab-Israeli War that exacerbated a sense of defeat and humiliation among many believers. Subsequently, these ideas and feelings gestated and blossomed among Islam-inspired revolutionaries in Iran, anti-Soviet mujahideen in Afghanistan, and others for whom *jihad* came to mean a righteous struggle against nonbelievers everywhere in the world. Al-Qaeda terrorism and its offshoots grew from this.

In Indonesia these ideas also found fertile ground. Mohammad Natsir's Dewan Da'wah Islamiyah (DDII) became a significant conduit of Islamist ideas into the country and helped to channel money from Wahhabist Saudis to Indonesian schools, mosques, and individual students.[18] Some young Indonesians adopted Islamist ideas while studying at Saudi and Egyptian universities or fighting in Afghanistan. They and their fellow activists embraced *dakwah* and revivalism and "proclaimed themselves Salafis."[19] In certain circles, fanatical puritanism led to withdrawal into exclusive apolitical enclaves; in others, it led to violent acts of religious cleansing and terrorism, such as the Laskar Jihad assault on Maluku in 2000 and the Jama'ah Islamiyah bombings in Bali in 2002, which left 202 people dead.[20] Carnage of this scale subsequently waned, but the Salafi turn in Indonesian Islam continued to gain adherents, as well as vociferous opponents.[21]

Some may find it tempting to discern the seeds of Indonesia's latter-day Islamism in Hamka and his Great Story. As we have noted, Hamka was a pioneer in the Indonesian *dakwah* movement and dedicated to the revival of Islam. He always identified himself as Salafi and embraced the forerunners of the modern Salafi movement: al-Afghani, Abduh, and Rida. Moreover, he was a reader and admirer of Qutb and Mawdudi and encouraged Indonesians to study them.[22] But it would be a mistake to read back into his Great Story the origins of the radical Islamism of today's Indonesia.

Let us return to Sayyid Qutb, the vanguard thinker of Islamism and a beacon for Indonesia's contemporary Salafis. Hamka and Qutb were contemporaries. They were born within two years of each other into colonized societies, and both lived through the transition to independence. (Egypt had been occupied by Britain two years before Qutb was born in 1906; it achieved independence in 1921 but remained under British influence.) Both became men of letters. As Hamka was launching his career as a novelist and Islam-oriented journalist in Medan, Qutb worked as a teacher and became a literary critic and poet in Cairo. Both men lived for a time in the United States, wrote autobiographies in middle age, and published popular Qur'anic commentaries, or *tafsir*s. Finally, both men were political prisoners whose lives reached the point of

crisis in the mid-1960s. Hamka survived to embark on a new phase in his career under Soeharto's New Order after 1966, the very year that Qutb was executed by the government of Gamal Abdel Nasser.[23]

Like Hamka, Sayyid Qutb grappled with the wrenching confrontation of Western power and ideas with Muslim societies and with Islam itself. Hamka clearly felt a kinship with him, commenting that his "love for Islam is very strong."[24] But, as I have noted, their outlooks were profoundly different. Whereas Qutb adopted a stance of strident anti-Westernism and in his later writings propagated for a pure Islamic society dominated exclusively by the *shari'a*, Hamka remained open to the valuable lessons of the West and to an incremental approach to achieving an Islam-infused society. Unlike Qutb, he embraced the nation as an appropriate vessel for such a society and to the end of his life focused on Islam *for Indonesia*. He framed his sober celebration of the defeat of Communism not as a triumph for God's sovereign domain on earth, as Qutb might have done, but as a triumph for Islam and all religions in Indonesia, "this nation of ours."[25] He advocated for adoption of the *shari'a* for Indonesian Muslims but stressed the role of the country's Muslim scholars and intellectuals in bringing this about gradually and by applying *ijtihad* to place it within the laws of the land. Hamka also continued to reject Qutb's interpretation of *jihad* as God's command "to fight against all the polytheists" and emphasized instead the *jihad* of *dakwah* and of positive effort and struggling "for goodness in each of our individual endeavors."[26] And whereas Qutb broke with reform leaders Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida and with Egypt's formative modernist writers such as Taha Husayn, Hamka continued to admire them. The same is true of prominent Muslim scholars of the past such as Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd, and al-Farabi, whose ideas Qutb brushed off as "nothing but a shadow of Greek philosophy . . . alien to the spirit of Islam" but whom Hamka remained in awe of even when he appraised some of their ideas critically.[27]

Although Hamka himself, as a modernist, embraced a purifying mission, he was not by character an ideologue. He wrote with respect about Islamic thinkers of all persuasions, even as he tipped his own conclusions to one side or the other. He was more interested in leading his readers to celebrate the high achievements and brilliance of Islamic civilization in its fullest than in villainizing those who led Islam astray. Sayyid Qutb came, in the end, to believe that genuine and pure Islamic life "stopped a long time ago in all parts of the world and [that] the 'existence' of Islam itself has therefore also stopped."[28] Hamka was far more positive. What he perceived in Indonesia was a growing community of devoted and knowledgeable believers. Although he became angrier as he grew older and openly opposed Christian proselytization and the encroachment in

Indonesia of Western-driven secularism—and occasionally adopted some Islamist language castigating Christians and Jews—he never abandoned the holistic narrative of his Great Story. In the end, Qutb arrived at a totalitarian vision. Hamka did not. Instead, he remained open to the new hybridities that Indonesia's complex, evolving society might achieve with Islam as its compass. This accounts for the diversity of his legacy, including his robust embrace of rationalism as well as the abiding appeal of his approach to Sufism.[29]

In 1997 Muhammadiyah renamed its Jakarta-based university Universitas Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. Hamka—or UHAMKA, as it is popularly known. His influential mosque, Masjid Agung Al-Azhar, now hosts a full K–12 school system and university of its own; here festive occasions occur in Hamka Auditorium. In 2011 Hamka was named an Indonesian national hero (*pahlawan nasional*). Meanwhile, the 1930s stories of Hamid and his fateful pilgrimage to Mecca in *In the Shelter of the Ka'ba* and of the striver Zainnudin and his great love, Hayati, in *The Sinking of the* van der Wijck live on in popular movies with lush, sweeping music.[30] The hopeful lessons of *Modern Sufism* still resonate in Indonesia, Malaysia, and beyond. There are occasional new editions of his key books and essays. Most importantly, Hamka's *Tafsir al-Azhar* remains a standard. Indeed, Munim Sirry has called it "the most influential Qur'an commentary in the Malay-Indonesian world."[31] This bears thinking about when we recall that Indonesia is the largest national society of Muslims on earth.

As for the rest of Hamka's lifetime of writing, rare copies of his cheaply printed books and periodicals survive in archives and collections, but most have long ago succumbed to Indonesia's unforgiving climate, fallen apart, and disappeared. The anecdotes, proverbs, poems, history lessons, personal asides, and traveler's tales with which he endlessly embellished these transient vessels have dissolved into the vast flowing stream of modern Indonesian discourse that Hamka called the "estuary of Indonesia." Here his Great Story rests today, framing the past and present for millions of people who, without consciously recognizing Hamka's formative voice, embrace his irrepressible confidence in human agency, his belief in Islam as a liberating religion, and his dream of filling modern Indonesian lives and the nation itself with its wisdom and truth.

Notes

Preface

1. Pankaj Mishra writes brilliantly about this in *From the Ruins of Empire: Revolt against the West and the Remaking of Asia* (New York: Picador, 2012).

2. This was the point of John R. W. Smail's famous article, "On the Possibility of an Autonomous History of Modern Southeast Asia," *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 2, no. 2 (1961): 72–102.

3. James R. Rush, *Opium to Java: Revenue Farming and Chinese Enterprise in Colonial Indonesia, 1860–1910* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990).

4. I am borrowing the term "Great Story," to mean metanarrative or a "master interpretive code," from Robert F. Berkhofer, *Beyond the Great Story: History as Text and Discourse* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 38–39. Berkhofer writes, "A good Great Story not only orders the past and interprets the present but also predicts the future" (42).

5. Interview, Wahid.

6. John M. Echols, ed., *Indonesian Writing in Translation* (Ithaca, NY: Modern Indonesia Project, Cornell University, 1956).

7. Rufus S. Hendon, trans. and ed., *Six Indonesian Short Stories*, Translation Series No. 7 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1968), 1–18.

8. Please consult the bibliography for the details.

9. Anthony Reid, *The Blood of the People: Revolution and the End of Traditional Rule in Northern Sumatra* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1979), plate 6B.

10. Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 152.

Prologue

The chapter epigraph is part of an untitled Hamka poem from 1970, quoted in Dr. H. Amura, "Dengan Buya Hamka dalam Berbagai Peristiwa," in *Kenang-kenangan: 70 Tahun Buya Hamka*, ed. Solichin Salam (Jakarta: Yayasan Nurul Islam, 1979), 215. In short, it means "We are Muslim; we are modern; we are Indonesians."

1. This figure is from the 1930 census, cited in Bernhard Dahm, *History of Indonesia in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Praeger, 1971), 84.

2. The 1854 law that defined subjects of the Dutch East Indies as Europeans, Foreign Orientals, or Natives remained in effect until the end of Dutch rule. In 1945 the

first constitution of the Republic of Indonesia declared all citizens equal before the law. See C. Fasseur, "Cornerstone and Stumbling Block: Racial Classification and the Late Colonial State in Indonesia," in *The Late Colonial State in Indonesia: The Political and Economic Foundations of the Netherlands Indies, 1880–1942*, ed. Robert Cribb (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1994), 52, 54–55.

3. Hamka was already a "movement person" at the age of sixteen, as we shall see, but this doesn't mean that he embraced all nationalist strategies and factions. See Fachry Ali, "Hamka dan Masyarakat Islam Indonesia: Catatan Pendahuluan Riwayat dan Perjuangannya," *Prisma* 2 (1983): 53–54. See also Jeffrey Hadler, "Home, Fatherhood, Succession: Three Generations of Amrullahs in Twentieth-Century Indonesia," *Indonesia* 65 (1998): 134.

4. As the Dutch scholar of Indonesian literature A. Teeuw concluded, for example, "Hamka cannot be considered a great author by any standards" (*Modern Indonesian Literature* [Dordrecht, Holland: Foris Publications, 1986], 72). Henk Maier problematizes the very idea of High Literature as applied to Malay and Indonesian writing (and Hamka) in *We Are Playing Relatives: A Survey of Malay Writing* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2004), 365.

5. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3rd ed. (1951; repr., Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1974), 1:16. Lake Maninjau is 16.5 kilometers long and 8 kilometers wide (*Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indie* ['s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1905], 2:462).

6. See Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:16–24.

7. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:41. Being officially a "Native" determined such matters as what taxes one paid; which laws, courts, and authorities one was subject to; what schools one might attend; how one was counted in the census; and so on. "Native" was juxtaposed to "European" and "Foreign Oriental" (meaning, for practical purposes, Chinese). In 1920 there were approximately 48.3 million Natives in the Dutch East Indies, some 876,000 Foreign Orientals, and 170,000 Europeans (a category that included Eurasians, Japanese, Turks, Filipinos, and a few thousand privileged former Natives). See J. S. Furnivall, *Netherlands India: A Study of Plural Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1944), 347.

8. This was *Khatibul Ummah* (or *Khatib ul-Ummah*; not untypically, Hamka uses more than one spelling). See Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:105, 2:19, 2:118.

9. Nidhi Aeusrivongse, "Fiction as History: A Study of Pre-war Indonesian Novels and Novelists (1920–1942)" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1976), 13. See also Herudjati Purwoko, "Kontribusi Melayu-Rendah Bagi Negeri Ini" (paper presented at Universitas Diponegoro, Semarang, October 27, 2008).

10. The Malay name Balai Pustaka was adopted in 1917 (Nidhi, "Fiction as History," 39).

11. See A. Teeuw, "The Impact of Balai Pustaka on Modern Indonesian Literature," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 35 (1972): 111–127.

12. Nidhi, "Fiction as History," 14.

13. According to Jeffrey Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs: Cultural Resilience in Indonesia through Jihad and Colonialism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008),

144n23. The source is very likely Hamka himself, "Amrullah," whose report is cited in a previous note by Hadler.

14. See Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:76–78.

15. For example, *Pelita Andalas*, April 26, 1927, and following issues.

16. See "Islam Igama persaudaraan" and "Fanatiek jang tidak beratsal," *Pelita Andalas*, August 18, 1927, signed H.A.M.K.A. In earlier articles he had experimented with H.A.M.K. Amroellah and Abd. Malik Karim. See also Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:153.

17. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:75.

18. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:75–76.

19. *Pembela Islam: Tarikh Sayidina Abu Bakar Shiddiq*; *Ringkasan Tarikh Ummat Islam*; *Kepentingan Melakukan Tabligh*; *Agama dan Perempuan*; and *Adat Minangkabau dan Agama Islam*. Hamka says that this final book was forbidden to circulate by the Dutch (*Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:23). See also Hadler, "Home, Fatherhood, Succession," 126–128.

20. See "The Youth Oath," in *The Indonesia Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, ed. Tineke Hellwig and Eric Tagliacozzo (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 269.

21. Minangkabau, Hamka's "mother tongue," is a dialect of Malay and when written in Jawi "does not differ from Malay." See Deliar Noer, "Yamin and Hamka: Two Routes to an Indonesian Identity," in *Perceptions of the Past in Southeast Asia*, ed. Anthony Reid and David Marr (Singapore: Heinemann Educational Books, 1979), 251. Deliar Noer also points out that Malay had long been "the language of knowledge" throughout the archipelago, as well as a practical lingua franca ("Hamka dan Sejarah," in Salam, *70 Tahun*, 108). On Malay's transition to Indonesian, see Maier, *We Are Playing Relatives*, 20–22. Maier describes Hamka's Malay as "of a breathtaking grace, mellifluous and silvery, perfectly suitable for recitation" (*We Are Playing Relatives*, 335).

22. Hamka remained intimately associated with Muhammadiyah his entire life. M. C. Ricklefs writes: "The history of Islamic Modernism in Indonesia after 1925 is to a very large extent the history of Muhammadiyah" (*A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1200*, 3rd ed. [Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001], 216).

23. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:22. Mochtar Naim said that Hamka represented "the epitome of the *mubaligh* tradition" (interview). On circuit preaching and recruiting for Muhammadiyah, see interview, Zainal Abidin Soe'aib (ZAS).

24. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:22.

25. H. A. M. K. Amrullah, *Arkanoe'l-Iman* (Makassar, 1933), 2.

26. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:29–31, 76.

27. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:42, 43.

Chapter 1. *Society's Compass*

1. The 1930 census gives 76,584 as the population of the city proper. See Reid, *Blood of the People*, 58; see also Karl J. Pelzer, *Planter and Peasant: Colonial Policy and the Agrarian Struggle in East Sumatra, 1863–1947* ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978), 63.

2. Charles Robequain, *Malaya, Indonesia, Borneo, and the Philippines: A Geographical, Economic, and Political Description of Malaya, the East Indies, and the Philippines*, trans. E. D. Laborde (London: Longmans, Green, 1954), 170.

3. Parada Harahap, *Dari Pantai ke Pantai: Perdjalanan ke-Soematra: October-Dec. 1925 dan Maart-April 1926* (Weltevreden: Bintang Hindia, 1926), 213.

4. Pelzer, *Planter and Peasant*, 63.

5. Reid, *Blood of the People*, 58; Pelzer, *Planter and Peasant*, 63.

6. See Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:108, 3:76–77, 3:102–103, 3:110–111; Reid, *Blood of the People*, 1–5, 50–53.

7. Reid writes that by 1940 *Pewarta Deli* had a "circulation as large as any Indonesian daily in the country" (*Blood of the People*, 59, 79). *Pandji Islam* was edited by Zainal Abidin (Z. A.) Ahmad and was Hamka's competition throughout the late 1930s.

8. See Hamka, *Merantau ke Deli*, 6th ed. (1941; repr., Jakarta: Penerbit Djajamurni, 1966), 5–6. Anthony Reid has concluded that, in some respects, "Medan in the 1930s was the most Indonesian city in Indonesia" (*Blood of the People*, 59).

9. Rusydi Hamka, *Pribadi dan Martabat Buya Prof. Dr. Hamka* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1981), 152; Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:13; interview, Soe'aib.

10. He tells the story in Hamka, *Tindjauan Di Lembah Nijl* (Jakarta: Gapura, 1951), 16.

11. On Cantonstraat. See *Pedoman Masjarakat*, January 20, 1936, 1. Physical description from H. Djarnawi Hadikusuma, "Buya Genius Hamka," in Salam, *70 Tahun*, 29; and Zainal Abidin Soe'aib, "Hamka dan Saya," in Salam, *70 Tahun*, 165.

12. *Pedoman Masjarakat*, January 20, 1936, 11.

13. *Pedoman Masjarakat*, January 20, 1936, 1.

14. On Tuanku Imam Bondjol, see Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs*, 29–30.

15. *Pedoman Masyarakat*, January 20, 1936. The elisions are Hamka's, for dramatic effect. Joesoef Sou'yb, who knew Hamka well in Medan, said that despite his "Islam first" policy and his nonparticipation in party politics, "political people [i.e., nationalists] considered him one of them" (interview, Sou'yb).

16. *Pedoman Masjarakat*; Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:192; M. Yunan Nasution, "Hamka Sebagai Pengarang dan Pujangga," in Salam, *70 Tahun*, 26.

17. Hamka, *Di Bawah Lindungan Kaba'ah*, 10th ed. (Balai Poestaka, 1938; Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Antara, 1976), 3–4.

18. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:112.

19. See Joesoef Sou'yb, "Hamka Contoh Hidup dari Harga Kemauan," in Salam, *70 Tahun*, 165–202, 170.

20. See, for example, Mohammad Natsir's article on Greek philosophy in *Pedoman Masjarakat*, July 31, 1936, 485, and Sukarno's "Propaganda Islam didalam Pendjara" in the issue of March 9, 1938, 183–185.

21. See *Pedoman Masjarakat*, August 8, 1936, which introduces the serialized story of "Suzanne and Gilbert" by al-Manfaluthi, translated and abridged by Hamka.

22. Officially, Hamka was *hoofdredacteur* and Nasution was *redacteur*.

23. Nasution, "Hamka Sebagai Pengarang dan Pujangga," 26.

24. Interview, Soe'aib.

25. Nasution, "Hamka Sebagai Pengarang dan Pujangga," 26. Haji Agus Hakim recalled that in 1935 Hamka sold his air gun in order to buy the three-volume *Tsauratul 'Arabiyah* (Arab revolution), which he proceeded to read from front to back without stopping ("Kulliyatul Muballighin Muhammadiyah dan Buya Hamka," in Salam, *70 Tahun*, 59).

26. Among the most prominent of these was Medan's own *Pewarta Deli*, edited by Djamaluddin Adinegoro. On the significance of *Utusan Melayu* and its editor, Yusoff Ishak, see William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967), 175–176.

27. See *Pedoman Masjarakat*, August 24, 1936; Hamka, *Nijl*, 40, 82–85; Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:84–87. See also Ami Ayalon, *The Press in the Arab Middle East: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 79, 81.

28. Interview, M. Yunan Nasution.

29. Interview, M. Yunan Nasution; Nasution, "Hamka Sebagai Pengarang dan Pujangga," 26–28. Hamka was famous for typing and talking at the same time and for his extreme concentration while writing, even amid the din of a large family. See H. Ghazali Sjahlan, "Nasehat yang Tulus Ikhlas," in Salam, *70 Tahun*, 75. See also Zainal Abidin Soe'aib, "Hamka dan Saya," in Salam, *70 Tahun*, 85.

30. See, for example, Rusydi Hamka, "Buya antara Cita, Amal, dan Gengsi," in *Hamka di Mata Hati Umat*, ed. Nasir Tamara, Buntaran Sanusi, and Vincent Djauhari (Jakarta: Penerbit Sinar Harapan, 1983), 268–269.

31. Nasution, "Hamka Sebagai Pengarang dan Pujangga," 26.

32. A typical example: the dates 1828–1960 [*sic*, 1906] given for Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen in *Modern Sufism*. See Hamka, *Tasauf Modern*, 2nd Malaysian ed. (1939; repr., Melaka: Penerbitan Abbas Bandong, 1976), 15.

33. Hamka, *Tasauf Modern*, xi.

34. Hamka complained that Ahmad Hassan once devoted an entire issue of his magazine, *Al-Lisan*, to his mistakes. See Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:200. On criticism he was touchy. See Hamka, *Tasauf Modern*, xii.

35. See Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan*, 2:192, for the first figure. M. Yunan Nasution and H. B. Jassin both give the five thousand figure. Interview, M. Yunan Nasution. Jassin confirms that this was a huge circulation for a weekly in the prewar years. Interview, Jassin.

36. *Pedoman Masjarakat*, May 20, 1936, 31. Hamka admired Ataturk for his big achievements but deplored his radical secularization.

37. *Pedoman Masjarakat*, September 16, 1936, 602.

38. Q 3:169, quoted from *The Qur'an*, trans. M. A. S. Abdel Haleem (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 47; *Pedoman Masjarakat*, August 24, 1936. Ami Ayalon describes *Al-Fath* (meaning "conquest" or "triumph") as "a platform for radical-Islamist discourse in Egypt of the 1930s" (e-mail communication, May 13, 2013).

39. See H. Agus Salim, "Soal Jahoedi dan Palestine," *Pedoman Masjarakat*, January 4, 1939, 2–3; and Hamka, "Oemmat Islam dan Jahoedi," *Pedoman Masjarakat*, September 16, 1936, 601.

40. Unsigned, "Poekoelan atas Jahoedi," *Pedoman Masjarakat*, December 14, 1938, 1002–1003.

41. See *Pedoman Masjarakat*, April 6, 1936, 188, and May 20, 1936, 316.

42. *Pedoman Masjarakat*, May 20, 1936, 316.

43. *Pedoman Masjarakat*, May 29, 1940, 428.

44. *Pedoman Masjarakat*, June 5, 1940, 452.

45. Cipto called on *ksatriya*, or "knightly," values in making his case. *Pedoman Masjarakat*, June 26, 1940, 510.

46. *Pedoman Masjarakat*, December 25, 1940, 1021.

47. See Alfian, *Muhammadiyah: The Political Behavior of a Muslim Modernist Organization under Dutch Colonialism* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1989), 269.

48. Ricklefs discusses these permutations in the context of the times in Ricklefs, *History*, 230–231, 236–241.

49. Quotation from Alfian, *Muhammadiyah*, 347. See also Reid, *Blood of the People*, 63. In the 1930s the vast majority of the colony's nationalists were de facto "cooperators."

50. Hamka's father, brother-in-law, two sisters, and a brother were also leaders in the movement. Alfian, *Muhammadiyah*, 248.

51. See Reid, *Blood of the People*, 65; Alfian, *Muhammadiyah*, 302–307, on the dramatic growth of Muhammadiyah in these years. Maier writes that *Pedoman Masjarakat* created "an imagined community of readers who kept up the conversation among themselves and developed a feeling of solidarity, no matter how far away they were living from one another" (*We Are Playing Relatives*, 359).

52. *Pedoman Masjarakat*, January 3, 1940, 1.

53. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:17. Dutch censorship practices at the time did not usually intervene before the fact but afterward. Interviews, Yassin and M. Yunan Nasution.

54. *Pedoman Masjarakat*, February 18, 1936, 79.

55. *Pedoman Masjarakat*, March 2, 1938, 169.

56. (Long life!), *Pedoman Masjarakat*, August 13, 1936, 562.

57. "Propaganda Islam didalam pendjara," *Pedoman Masjarakat*, March 9, 1938, 183–185.

58. For example, Hamka launched a series by Hatta titled "Kedoedoekan Indonesia dalam Perekonomian Doenia," in *Pedoman Masjarakat*, February 1, 1939, 85–87.

59. *Pedoman Masjarakat*, May 1, 1940, 345.

60. *Pedoman Masjarakat*, February 8, 1939, 106–107. A key figure connecting Muhammadiyah to PII was K. H. Mas Mansur, Muhammadiyah's national chairperson from 1936 to 1942. Hamka published his "Apa Sebabnja 'Partai Islam Indonesia' didirikan?" in *Pedoman Masjarakat*, February 22, 1939. On PII, see Alfian, *Muhammadiyah*, 233–237.

61. *Pedoman Masjarakat*, January 17, 1940, 43. "Ik vraag U een perskaart!" is a rare full Dutch sentence.

62. G. H. Bousquet, *A French View of the Netherlands Indies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1940); *Pedoman Masjarakat*, February 28, 1940, 161, and March 27, 1940, 253.

63. PNI-Baru did not join GAPI. See Ricklefs, *History*, 242; *Pedoman Masjarakat*, January 3, 1940, 1.

64. *Pedoman Masjarakat*, August 18, 1936, 530.

65. *Pedoman Masjarakat*, February 5, 1941, 107.

66. *Pedoman Masjarakat*, December 7, 1938, 1000.

67. See the article by the psychiatrist Dr. M. Amir in *Pedoman Masjarakat*, January 11, 1939; and the discussion in *Pedoman Masjarakat*, probably written by Hamka, January 18, 1939, 44–45, where the writer says we must guard against the practice in our *surau*s, dormitories, and schools.

68. See *Pedoman Masjarakat*, May 22, 1940, 405.

69. *Pedoman Masjarakat*, December 18, 1940, 1005.

70. See *Pedoman Masjarakat*, April 10, 1940, masthead.

71. Interview, Jassin. Hamka's name was *harum* (sweet, famous), he said.

72. *Pedoman Masjarakat*, December 10, 1936, 850, reports that some eight hundred people appeared to hear his Idul Fitri sermon (or *khutbah*) celebrating the end of the fasting month. See also photograph 6B in Reid, *Blood of the People*, in which Medan's leading journalists, Hamka included, host M. H. Thamrin in December 1939. Ricklefs reports that by 1938, Muhammadiyah had 250,000 members and "had spread throughout the main islands of Indonesia" (*History*, 216).

73. On Ichwanus Safa, see Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:110–111; Reid, *Blood of the People*, 64–65; Sou'yb, "Hamka Contoh Hidup dari Harga Kemauan," 166; and interviews, M. Yunan Nasution, Sou'yb.

74. Up to 1930, the date of the last complete colonial census, only 18 percent of elementary school graduates went on to secondary school, and only 9 percent of school-age children went to school at all. See Nidhi, "Fiction as History," 118.

75. Interview, Oei; Hamka, *Tasauf Modern*, ix.

76. See Hamka, *Tasauf Modern*, x, 4, 6; see also Mansur, "Tasawuf Rasional Purifikatif Hamka" (MA thesis, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2004), 84, 94, 124.

77. Hamka, *Tasauf Modern*, x.

78. Hamka, *Tasauf Modern*, 37.

79. See, for example, Azra, *Origins*, 152; Julia Day Howell, "Sufism and the Indonesian Islamic Revival," *Journal of Asian Studies* 60 (2001): 711, 713; Mansur, "Tasawuf Rasional," 125–126; Dawam Rahardjo, *Intelektual, Inteligensia, dan Perilaku Politik Bangsa: Risalah Cendekiawan Muslim* (Bandung: Mizan, 1993), 201–207.

80. Hamka, *Tasauf Modern*, 2, 3.

81. Hamka, *Tasauf Modern*, 2.

82. Hamka, *Tasauf Modern*, 4.

83. Hamka, *Tasauf Modern*, 2.

84. Hamka, *Tasauf Modern*, 4.

85. Hamka, *Tasauf Modern*, 4.

86. Hamka, *Tasauf Modern*, 2. See M. C. Ricklefs, *Islamisation and Its Opponents in Java: A Political, Social, Cultural and Religious History, c. 1930 to the Present* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012), 52–55 on the important influence of Hamka's *Tasauf Modern*. Elizabeth Sirriyeh discusses the origins of this critique in the writings of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, and Rashid Rida in her *Sufis and Anti-Sufis: The Defense, Rethinking, and Rejection of Sufism in the Modern World* (London: Routledge, 2013).

87. Hamka, *Tasauf Modern*, 3. On al-Junaid and Hamka's thought, see Mansur, "Tasawuf Rasional," 77, 84, 124.

88. Hamka, *Tasauf Modern*, 108; *The Qur'an*, trans. Haleem, 201.

89. Hamka, *Tasauf Modern*, 102, 105–108.

90. As rendered in Indonesian, also *taqlid*.

91. Hamka, *Tasauf Modern*, 102, 104.

92. Hamka, *Tasauf Modern*, 18, 19, citing the Hadith *Aosha Radhiallahu 'ambu*.

93. Hamka, *Tasauf Modern*, 20. Paraphrase of "Bertambah luas akal, bertambah luaslah hidup, bertambah datanglah bahagia."

94. Hamka, *Tasauf Modern*, 18, 19, 76.

95. Hamka, *Tasauf Modern*, 30; Q 3:103.

96. Hamka, *Tasauf Modern*, 34, 76, 91, 92.

97. Hamka, *Tasauf Modern*, 119–128, 94, 143, 49, 37.

98. Hamka, *Tasauf Modern*, 23.

99. Hamka, *Tasauf Modern*, 14, 55, 56, 59, 60, 119, 135.

100. Marshall Hodgson discusses the early Mutazilites in *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 1:384–385.

101. See Nadav Safran, *Egypt in Search of Political Community: An Analysis of the Intellectual and Political Evolution of Egypt, 1804–1952* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), 64; Richard C. Martin and Mark R. Woodward with Dwi S. Atmaja, *Defenders of Reason in Islam: Mu'tazilism from Medieval School to Modern Symbol* (Oxford: Oneworld Oxford, 1997), 19, 141–142; Harun Nasution, *Muhammad Abduh dan Teologi Rasional Mu'tazilah* (Jakarta: Penerbit Universitas Indonesia, 1987); see also Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 149, 230.

102. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:119.

103. Seventeen editions had appeared by the time of his death in 1982.

104. These were *Falsafah Hidup*, 1939; *Lembaga Hidup*, 1940; and *Lembaga Budi*, 1940.

105. Translated Manfaluthi stories include "Pembalasan . . ." in *Pedoman Masjarakat*, August 8, 1936; and "Ke 'schaen' Perempuan" in *Pedoman Masjarakat*, January 12, 1938, 37.

106. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:113–116.

107. Nidhi, "Fiction as History," 49. Nidhi identifies Hamka as one of the Indies' "famous writers who published most of his work privately." *Dibawah Lindungan Ka'bah*, published by Balai Pustaka (1st ed., 1938), was an exception.

108. Nidhi, "Fiction as History," 49; Sou'yb, "Hamka Contoh Hidup dari Harga Kemauan," 166. Sou'yb's series was called Loekisan Poedjangga (Portrayals of great writers). Sou'yb's company was Penerbit Boekhandel "Tjerdas."

109. Indeed, in Sou'yb's promotional materials, Hamka is always listed first. See *Loekisan Poedjangga: Madjalah Roman Detektip Popoeler*, December 15, 1939, 2. The Roman Pergaulan series was published by "Penjiaran Ilmoe" (Penerbit, Boekhandel, dan Uitgevery) in Fort de Kock (Bukittinggi) and advertised in *Pedoman Masjarakat*.

110. This is often remarked upon. See A. Hasjmy, "Prof. Dr. Buya Hamka yang Saya Kenal," in Salam, *70 Tahun*, 149.

111. According to his wife, who observed him. Interview, Soe'aib.

112. H. B. Jassin has emphasized the significance of this "readership" in the 1930s Indies (interview, Jassin). Jassin and Armijn Pane were among the "Batavian critics" associated with the literary Balai Pustaka who admired Hamka's novels. See Maier, *We Are Playing Relatives*, 366. H. Fachruddin Ilyas writes of his prewar school days that copies of *Dibawah Lindungan Ka'bah* were passed from hand to hand so often that the covers came off and that *The Sinking of the* van der Wijk "often disappeared from our library" ("Kepribadian Buya Hamka yang Saya Kenal," in Salam, *70 Tahun*, 279).

113. Hamka, *Tuan Director*, 4th ed. (1939; repr., Jakarta: Djajamurni, 1961), 7–8.

114. Hamka, *Tenggelamnya Kapal* van der Wijk (1939; repr., Jakarta: Panji Masyarakat, 1976), 16.

115. In Indonesian, the word meaning "country" (and, colloquially, "nation") is *tanah air*, literally, "land and water."

116. The column is "Soal Tanah Air." See *Pedoman Masjarakat*, May 29, 1940, 423. The useful concept of the geo-body is developed by Thongchai Winichakul in *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994).

117. Hamka, *Tenggelamnya*, 48.

118. Hamka, *Merantau ke Deli*, 102.

119. Hamka, *Tenggelamnya*, 56.

120. Hamka, *Tenggelamnya*, 5–6.

121. Hamka, *Tenggelamnya*, 1–2.

122. Hamka, *Tuan Director*, 56–57; Hamka, *Tenggelamnya*, 74.

123. Hamka, *Tuan Director*, 11, 15, 23, 84. These words remained in the 1961 edition.

124. Hamka, *Merantau*, 111.

125. Hamka, *Merantau*, 10.

126. Hamka, *Tuan Director*, 7–10; Hamka, *Merantau*, 20.

127. Hamka, *Merantau*, 19. On "Indentured Labor," see Ann Laura Stoler, *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation Belt, 1870–1979*, 2nd ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 25–29.

128. Hamka, *Tuan Director*, 44, 82 (quotation). Joesoef Sou'yb, who published *Tuan Director*, told me that Djazuli was modeled on Hamka's Medan rival, Zainal Abidin Ahmad, whose weekly *Pandji Islam* was Hamka's competition (interview, Sou'yb). Writing about their Medan days and *Mr. Director* in particular, many years after both men had achieved success in Jakarta, Zainal Abidin Ahmad said that only God and Hamka himself knew "what feelings were raging inside Hamka in those days" ("Bersyukur Umur Panjang dan Amal Panjang," in Salam, *70 Tahun*, 153). See the advertisements for the two rival papers in the Diniyah Putri yearbook from 1939 in *Copy Peringatan 15 Tahun Diniyah Putri Padang Pandjang* (1939), 303, in Diniyah Putri, *Peringatan 55 Tahun Diniyah Putri Padang Panjang* (Jakarta: Ghalia Indonesia, 1978).

129. Hamka, *Merantau*, 108. On the impact of the Depression, see Furnivall, *Netherlands India*, 428–430, 444; Stoler, *Sumatra's Plantation Belt*, 43–44.

130. Hamka, *Merantau*, 108.

131. Hamka, *Tenggelamnya*, 66–68.

132. Hamka, *Tenggelamnya*, 68.

133. Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs*, 103.

134. In 1939 there were only thirty-six professional ethnic Indonesian advocates in the entire Indies. See Fasseur, "Cornerstone and Stumbling Block," 34. A subject sometimes satirized in *Society's Compass* by M. Yunan Nasution was the adoption of Dutch-sounding names by aspiring Natives, a famous example being Joesoef Hoetabarat (Westvillage), who became J. Westendorp. Syma Nare [Nasution], "Podjok Keramat," *Pedoman Masjarakat*, December 18, 1940, 1020.

135. Hamka, *Tenggelamnya*, 37.

136. Interview, M. Yunan Nasution. See also Nasution, "Hamka Sebagai Pengarang dan Pujangga," 27.

137. Hamka, *Merantau*, 108.

138. Hamka, *Merantau*, 9, 19–20. Stoler writes, "The female coolies were young, almost all Javanese, and if not openly coerced to prostitute themselves were given few other options." Marriages and concubinage, however tenuous, "offered some modicum of defense against the economic and sexual vulnerability to which women without a resident male protector were subject" (Stoler, *Sumatra's Plantation Belt*, 31, 33).

139. Hamka, *Merantau*, 13.

140. Hamka, *Merantua*, 25.

141. Hamka, *Merantau*, 146.

142. Hamka, *Terusir* (Jakarta: Daja Upaja, ca. 1963; first published in 1938 as *Karena Fitnah*), 16, 17, 31.

143. Hamka, *Merantau*, 129.

144. Hamka, *Merantau*, 129.

145. Hamka, *Tenggelamnya*, 149–50. See Nidhi's discussion of Zainuddin in Nidhi, "Fiction as History," 55.

146. Hamka, *Di Djeput Mamaknya* (1941; repr., Medan: Tjerdas, 1949), 32, 16.

147. Hamka, *Di Djeput*, 43–35.

148. Hamka, "Di Suruh Meminta Ampun," in *Di Dalam Lembah Kehidupan*, by Hamka (Batavia: Balai Pustaka, 1940), 155–156. Paraphrasing, "biar menyeluduk asal mendapat telur ayam."

149. Hamka, *Tuan Director*, 23, 26.

150. Hamka, *Tuan Director*, 14.

151. Hamka, *Tuan Director*, 23, 70, 84, 85.

152. Hamka, *Tuan Director*, 54.

153. As Muluk urges Zainuddin in *The Sinking of the* van der Wijck, "Enter this [movement], spread your wings, and exhaust yourself for this" (Hamka, *Tenggelamnya*, 143).

154. This being Hamka, unbeknownst to Sofjan, Mariah is his very own mother. See Hamka, *Terusir*, 76–83.

155. Nidhi comments that Hamka's novel *Tuan Director* was the first in Indonesia to elaborate on the idea of Islamic socialism ("Fiction as History," 322).

156. Hamka, *Tuan Director*, 86.

157. Hamka, *Tuan Director*, 87.

158. Nidhi, "Fiction as History," 60, citing Armijn Pane, "Mengapa Pengarang Modern Soeka Mematikan," *Poedjangga Baroe* 8 (March 1941): 225–231.

159. Nidhi, "Fiction as History," 60.

160. Hamka, *Tasauf Modern*, 74.

161. See the discussion of Hamka's treatment of fate and human agency in M. Yunan Yusuf, "Corak Pemikiran Kalam Tafsir Al-Azhar: Sebuah Telaah tentang Pemikiran Hamka dalam Teologi Islam" (PhD diss., IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 1989), 241–243.

162. See, for example, Hamka, "Di Suruh," 60; *Merantau*, 33; and others to follow.

163. Hamka, *Lindungan*, 66.

164. Hamka, *Tenggelamnya*, 200.

165. Nasution, "Hamka Sebagai Pengarang dan Pujangga," 27.

166. *Pedoman Masjarakat*, January 1, 1941, 1.

167. *Pedoman Masjarakat*, June 25, 1941, 511, and July 30, 1941, 610.

168. *Pedoman Masjarakat*, January 22, 1941, 61, April 2, 1941, 263, and July 23, 1941, 582.

169. *Pedoman Masjarakat*, November 26, 1941, 941.

170. *Pedoman Masjarakat*, December 10, 1941, 981.

171. *Pedoman Masjarakat*, December 10, 1941, 981.

Chapter 2. Father and Son

1. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:117; Hamka, *Ajahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abd. Karim Amrullah dan Perdjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera*, 3rd ed. (Jakarta: Djayamurni, 1967), 272–273.

2. In the classic studies by Alfian (*Muhammadiyah*) and Taufik Abdullah (*Schools and Politics: The Kaum Muda Movement in West Sumatra [1927–1933]* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell

Modern Indonesia Project, Cornell University, 1971]), *Ajahku* is a key primary source, and more books and articles by Hamka are listed in the bibliographies than any other author. Alfian makes the point that Hamka's account of certain Minangkabau Muhammadiyah matters are confirmed in official Dutch accounts. See Alfian, *Muhammadiyah*, 248n97. Deliar Noer (*The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia: 1900–1942*, East Asia Historical Monographs [Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1973]) also cites *Ajahku* repeatedly and other Hamka sources.

3. In the early 1950s, this was still a relatively rare literary form in Indonesia. Raden Soetomo was the first prominent Indonesian to write his *kenang-kenangan* (memoirs or memories), in 1934; in 1936 P. A. A. Djajadiningrat published his *Herinneringen* (in Dutch and Indonesian); and in 1948 Tan Malaka published his famous *Dari Penjara ke Penjara*. See Benedict Anderson, "A Time of Darkness and a Time of Light: Transposition in Early Indonesian Nationalist Thought," in *Perceptions of the Past in Southeast Asia*, ed. Anthony Reid and David Marr (Singapore: Heinemann Educational Books, 1979), 222; C. W. Watson, *Of Self and Nation: Autobiography and the Representation of Modern Indonesia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), 250, 251; and C. W. Watson, "Religion, Nationalism, and the Individual in Modern Indonesian Autobiography: Hamka's *Kenang-Kenangan Hidup*," in *Variation, Transformation, and Meaning: Studies on Indonesian Literatures in Honour of A. Teeuw*, ed. J. J. Ras and S. O. Robson (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1991), 106–129. Among the Egyptian writers that Hamka admired were Taha Hussayn, Ahmad Amin, and Sayyid Qutb, all of whom had written memoirs by this time and, in the case of Qutb, an autobiographical novel as well. See Hamka, *Nijl*, 55; see also Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi, *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 99, 294; William E. Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism: A Translation and Critical Analysis of "Social Justice in Islam"* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), xv; and Nadav Safran, *Egypt in Search of Political Community: An Analysis of the Intellectual and Political Evolution of Egypt, 1804–1952* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), 261.

4. As C. W. Watson reminds us, autobiographies are "programmatically designed" with a "conscious creative purpose" in mind (*Of Self and Nation*, 115). Jeffrey Hadler, who sees in Hamka's memoirs a tragedy of childhood loss and dislocation, believes Hamka used his memoirs to write himself *out* of certain aspects of history ("Home, Fatherhood, Succession," 150). Undoubtedly this is true in places but by and large I believe the opposite: that Hamka's memoirs, and his father's biography, were very much written to place himself *in* history.

5. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 19.

6. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 16. Hadler notes that Minangkabau is listed in the Majapahit chronicle *Nagarakertagama* in 1365 (*Muslims and Matriarchs*, 4n7).

7. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 19.

8. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 18.

9. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 22.

10. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 22, 23. Hadler discusses this unique system in *Muslims and Matriarchs*, 5–8.

11. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 21.

12. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 19, 20. Hamka translates Besar Empat Balai as "orang besar berempat." They were the Bandahara, Machudum, Indomo, and Tuan Qadhi, in addition to a war chief called the Panglima Besar / Tuan Gedang.

13. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 20.

14. On the nature and importance of these far-flung networks, see Azra, *Origins*.

15. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 23–26. On the brotherhoods, or *tarikat*, see Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs*, 1917.

16. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 28. One succinct discussion of the link between Wahhabism in Arabia and reformism in Sumatra is Alfian, *Muhammadiyah*, 88–90.

17. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 28.

18. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 28, 29. See Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs*, 21–26, and 18n1 on the name "Padri" and literature on the Padri Wars.

19. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 29–30.

20. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 31–32, 34.

21. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 36–37, 42.

22. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 38–39.

23. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 41.

24. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 40–41.

25. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 47.

26. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 46.

27. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 48.

28. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 49.

29. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 50. See Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs*, 35, 48, 200, on the *adat* title of *tuanku laras* or *larashoofd* and other administrative aspects of the new order.

30. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 48–49.

31. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 54.

32. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 56.

33. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 56.

34. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 72.

35. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 71, 72.

36. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 72.

37. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 72.

38. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 72, 80–82.

39. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 57, 58. Nenek Tarwasa died in 1943.

40. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 58. On the significance of *Tafsir al-Jalalayn*, see R. Michael Feener, "Notes towards the History of Qur'anic Exegesis in Southeast Asia," *Studia Islamica* 5 (1998): 55, 58.

41. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 61. On the career and role of Ahmad Chatib, see Alfian, *Muhammadiyyah*, 101–103. See Laffan's detailed discussion of Ahmad Chatib (Ahmad Khatib) in Michael Francis Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia: The Umma below the Winds* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 106–113.

42. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 61.

43. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 62.

44. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 73.

45. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 64, 75.

46. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 74.

47. See Abdullah, *Schools and Politics*, 12–13, on the origins of the terms *kaum muda* and *kaum kuno/tua*.

48. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 79.

49. Hamka confirms that it did. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 80–83.

50. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 86. Maninjau is an *onderafdeeling*, or "subdistrict," part of what the Dutch called the Danau-districten, or lake districts. *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indie*, 2:462.

51. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 87–88.

52. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 88–89.

53. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 98–100.

54. See Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, for a foundational treatment of al-Afghani and Abduh and their times.

55. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 90–91, 99. See Safran, *Egypt*, 62–84, for a good discussion of Abduh's influence.

56. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 90.

57. Hamka, *Said Djamaluddin al-Afghany: Pelopor Kebangkitan Muslimin* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1970), 101; Alfian, *Muhammadiyah*, 96; Mishra, *Ruins of Empire*, 98.

58. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 91. This phrase was added sometime after the 1950 first edition. See Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 226.

59. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 92.

60. See Roff, *Origins*, 56–61. On these matters, Hamka himself is one of Roff's key sources.

61. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 93. His name is given as Hadji Abdulkarim bin Tuanku Kisai, emphasizing his lineage.

62. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 93.

63. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 93. One such example were stories describing the levels of heaven as being made of copper, iron, stone, and gold. Laffan attributes the collapse of *Al-Imam* to "financial disputes and personal rivalries" (*Islamic Nationhood*, 172).

64. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 95.

65. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 100–101, 236–237.

66. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 234.

67. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 100.

68. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 102.

69. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 106.

70. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 104, 109. See Alfian's discussion of these periodicals and their influence (*Muhammadiyah*, 105–107).

71. The sultans and their mini-kingdoms were under the management of British Residents and, as either federated (Selangor, Perak, Negri Sembilan, Pahang) or

unfederated (Johor, Kedah, Kelantan, Perlis, Trengganu) Malay states, were unequivocally embraced within the British Empire.

72. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 106–107, 122. His books were banned there, Hamka explains.

73. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 104–105.

74. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 100–111. Dahlan taught in Dutch-run schools.

75. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 110.

76. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 111–112. Rasul was undoubtedly also drawing on the earlier educational innovations of his friend Abdullah Ahmad, who had introduced many of these features in his Adabiyah School in Padang beginning in 1909. By 1915 this innovative school had been taken over by the colonial government, "losing some of its reformist character," according to Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs*, 101. On the Adabiyah School, see Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs*, 101; Alfian, *Muhammadiyah*, 108; and Noer, *Modernist Movement*, 38–39. Rasul's own student Zainuddin Labai had also opened the influential modernist Diniyah School for girls in 1916. See Diniyah Putri, *Peringatan, 55 Tahun: Diniyah Putri Padang Panjang* (Ghalia Indonesia, [1978]), 42.

77. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 111.

78. Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs*, 102.

79. Gusti Asnan, *Kamus Sejarah Minangkabau* (Padang: PPIM, 2003), 309.

80. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 111, 113, 119.

81. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 130. Others mentioned include Semaun, Alimin, Muso, and Darsono. Ruth McVey, however, says Batuah was influenced mainly through time spent in Aceh (*The Rise of Indonesian Communism* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1965], 174). See Asnan, *Kamus*, 17–18, who agrees.

82. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 131.

83. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 131. Batuah's journal was called *Pamandangan Islam* (Muslim viewpoint).

84. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 131.

85. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 132. Al-Afghani's book was *Arradu 'alad Dahrijin*.

86. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 131–135.

87. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 132.

88. See Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs*, 173–174; McVey, *Indonesian Communism*, 323–346, 345–346.

89. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 150.

90. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 133–135.

91. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 136.

92. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 138–141. His good friend Abdullah Ahmad; Muhammadiyah's leader, H. Mas Mansur; and Cokroaminoto of Sarikat Islam traveled with him. Mas Mansur was chair of the Dewan Tarjih of Muhammadiyah. Alfian, *Muhammadiyah*, 263.

93. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 144–146.

94. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 148.

95. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 148.

96. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 147.

97. Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs*, 164; Alfian, *Muhammadiyah*, 243, 247. Alfian writes that the movement "spread like wildfire throughout Minangkabau" in the years following the failed Communist uprising.

98. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 149.

99. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 156.

100. Alfian, *Muhammadiyah*, 248.

101. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 171.

102. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 164, 165, 171; Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs*, 165; Alfian, *Muhammadiyah*, 262–263. Hamka, who attended the conference, identifies the speaker as Siti Rasjidah. Alfian identifies her as Siti Haijinah, based on a Dutch intelligence report.

103. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 149–153; Alfian, *Muhammadiyah*, 265–272; Abdullah, *Schools and Politics*, 110–113. Alfian notes that the local officials in question were Native ones, that is, rivals of the *ulama*s for influence. Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs*, 104. Hadler dates the showdown to 1930. Hamka's date is August 18, 1928, which is followed by Alfian and Abdullah.

104. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 153.

105. In 1928 there were thirty-nine Thawalib schools in West Sumatra; by 1930 there were nearly twenty Muhammadiyah schools of various kinds in the region. See Abdullah, *Schools and Politics*, 61, 108. Alfian, *Muhammadiyah*, 251, lists thirty Diniyah schools in 1932. In Java and East Sumatra, the nationalist-inspired but overtly nonpolitical Taman Siswa schools also aroused suspicion. See Reid, *Blood of the People*, 63; Alfian, *Muhammadiyah*, 308.

106. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 160.

107. See Alfian, *Muhammadiyah*, 248, 269, 276–277, 281; both Haji Rasul and Hamka himself were the targets of these spies. See also Harry A. Poeze, "Political Intelligence in the Netherlands Indies," in Cribb, *Late Colonial State*, 236.

108. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 156, 172–173, 178.

109. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 161.

110. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 179–183.

111. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 185.

112. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 185.

113. Jeffrey Hadler writes, "I suspect that no such book exists" ("Home, Fatherhood, Succession," 132).

114. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 9, 222. See also Hamka, *Ajahku*, 11–14. In later editions, Hamka cited new literature and acknowledged several people personally for additions and corrections to the original book. In the 1957 edition he thanks H. A. Wahid Hasjim and H. Abubakar for new materials and mentions, among others, Muhammad Radjab's book *Perang Paderi di Sumatera Barat.*

115. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 158.

116. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 155–156.

117. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 213, 217–218, 183, 273, 220.

118. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 214 and 216, among many others.

119. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 214.

120. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 215, 267.

121. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 224.

122. Only one of their children survived to adulthood: Abdul Wadud was Rasul's youngest child. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 224.

123. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 62, 65.

124. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 224.

125. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:63.

126. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:24.

127. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:23. See Watson's discussion of the convention of third-person narrative in Indonesian and Malay writing and Hamka's use of it. Watson, *Of Self and Nation*, 116.

128. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:23.

129. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:19, 60.

130. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:64.

131. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:65.

132. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:65, 66.

133. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:67.

134. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:68.

135. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:69, 70. In a poignant short story from the late 1930s titled "Anak Tinggal," Hamka depicted the cruel impact of divorce on a small boy. This story, anthologized in Hamka, *Dalam Lembah Kehidupan* (ca. 1950; Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Antara, 1975), 27–40, has been rendered in English by Rufus S. Hendon as "A Deserted Child," in Hendon, *Six Indonesian Short Stories*, 1–18.

136. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:69, 71, 73.

137. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:29.

138. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 267.

139. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:47, 54.

140. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 267.

141. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:55, 58, 59, 60, 61. *De Klauw Tangan Besi* was a 1916 American silent-era serial. See Progressive Silent Film List, http://www.silentera.com/PSFL/data/I/IronClaw1916.html.

142. Listed in Abdullah, *Schools and Politics*, 246, as *Sinar Soematra*, 1914–1935, and *Tjaja Soematra*, 1914–1933.

143. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:62.

144. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 267.

145. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:80.

146. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:7. He gives the year as 1924.

147. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:83.

148. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:85, 88, 89. He carried these scars for the rest of his life. During the brutal culture wars of the 1950s and 1960s, Taufik Abdullah

witnessed an occasion during which Pramoedya Ananta Toer insulted him publicly with the epithet "pock face" (interview, Abdullah). A. A. (Ali Akbar) Navis suggested that this disfigurement, combined with Hamka's scant formal education, led to an inferiority complex that drove him to achieve. Quoted by Leon Agusta, "Di Akhir Pementasan yang Rampung," in Tamara, Sanusi, and Djauhari, *Hamka di Mata Hati Umat*, 95.

149. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:88, 89, 90.

150. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 208.

151. The classic study is Mochtar Naim, *Merantau: Pola Migrasi Suku Minangkabau* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1979).

152. On this formative period, see Takashi Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion: Popular Radicalism in Java, 1912–1926* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990).

153. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 267.

154. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 267. Deliar Noer describes these as "cadre courses" for Sarekat Islam and Muhammadiyah ("Yamin and Hamka," 254).

155. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:99, 100.

156. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:103.

157. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:96, 100, 102. On "Javanese religion" (*agama* Java), see M. C. Ricklefs, *Mystic Synthesis in Java: A History of Islamization from the Fourteenth to the Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Norwalk, CT: EastBridge, 2006). See also M. C. Ricklefs, *Polarizing Javanese Society: Islamic and Other Visions c. 1830–1930* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 1–11, 221.

158. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:101.

159. It was also a common convention. Sayyid Qutb used it in his memoir of 1946, *Tifl min-al-Qarya* (*A Child from the Village*), which Hamka is likely to have read. Sayyid Qutb, *A Child from the Village*, ed. and trans. and with an intro. by John Calvert and William Shepard (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2004).

160. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:104, 105. See also Ali, "Hamka dan Masyarakat Islam Indonesia," 54.

161. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:107.

162. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:103–112, 121; interview, Rusydi Hamka; interview, Mansur.

163. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:131–132.

164. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:133, 148, 149.

165. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:137.

166. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:137–138.

167. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:138.

168. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:138.

169. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:142–143.

170. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:145. On Salim and his career in the Hejaz, see Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood*, 181–191.

171. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:193.

172. *Pelita Andalas*, August 2, 4, 6, 13, 1927.

173. Hamka, *Merantau*, 5, "Pendahuluan."

174. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:156.

175. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:156.

176. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:157.

177. He certainly hints at this in his memoirs and also in an interview years later. See "Nama Saya: Hamka," in Tamara, Sanusi, and Djauhari, *Hamka di Mata Hati Umat*, 51–52.

178. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1:160.

179. They were published the following year. See the prologue, note 19.

180. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:19.

181. See Alfian, *Muhammadiyah*, 280–81, 281n141, revealing that Minangkabau officials had transcribed passages of Hamka's speech for the Dutch.

182. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:22, 23, 26.

183. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:16, 22.

184. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:29. Hamka's endeavors in Makassar are discussed in Karel Steenbrink, "Hamka en de nadere islamisering van Makassar," *Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde* 147 (1991): 217–232.

185. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:31.

186. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:31, 92.

187. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:31. He says in his memoirs that he had taken the tale from a book of abridged Arabic stories.

188. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:30.

189. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:30.

190. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:32.

191. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 268.

192. The school was called the Kulliyatul Muballighin-Muhammadiyah.

193. Hamka, *Agama dan Perempoean* (Padang Panjang: Boekhandel & Uitgever Dt. Seripado, 1929), 33. Hamka did not say, in this early book, that polygamy was wrong. He defended it in the context of the wartime circumstances of the Prophet Muhammad's original teachings. But he said, in an argument gaining ground among modernists, that the Qur'an requires that a man must treat all of his wives equally; he must be equally fair to all. This being virtually impossible in ordinary circumstances, "only one wife is permitted."

194. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:36.

195. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:36–41. Almost simultaneously, Hamka was also invited to become the religious leader of a small community of Muslims in Japan.

196. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:193. The photo is on page 194 and includes Hamka's friend and Muhammadiyah consul in Bengkulu Oei Tjeng Hien (Abdul Karim Oei).

197. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:125.

198. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:126.

199. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:126.

200. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:136.

201. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:44–49, 52–54.

202. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:52.

203. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:52, 55. In the original passage, Hamka refers to himself as "our friend," rendered here as "I."

204. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:68.

205. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:76, 77. Another famous tale is *Hikayat Panji Semirang* (Tale of Prince Semirang).

206. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:78.

207. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:78.

208. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:86.

209. Hamka suppresses the latter fact in his memoirs, even in the later editions—a telling omission. See Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:79. Alexandre Dumas, *Margaretta Gauthier*, trans. Prof. Dr. Hamka (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1975). This is the fifth edition/printing of Hamka's 1941 translation!

210. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:88.

211. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:80, 82–83.

212. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:84.

213. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:87.

214. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:87. In Hamka's rendering: *Al Hilal*, *Al Moktataf*, *Arrisalah*, *As Tsaqafah*, and *Al Irlan*. See Ayalon, *The Press*, 53–54, 87, 275–277. Personal e-mail communication from Ami Ayalon, May 12, 2013.

215. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:88.

216. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:89.

217. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:89.

218. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 2:180.

Chapter 3. Hamka-san and Bung Haji

1. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:12.

2. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:13–14.

3. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:19–20. On Masubuchi and his work with the Fujiwara Kikan advance team, see Reid, *Blood of the People*, 89–93. See also Peter Post, William Frederick, Iris Heidebrink, and Shigeru Sato, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Indonesia in the Pacific War* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 551.

4. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:19.

5. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:15.

6. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:17, 18.

7. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:16.

8. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:17.

9. Jean Gelman Taylor, *Indonesia: Peoples and Histories* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 311.

10. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:23.

11. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:23.

12. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:26.

13. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:27. There were also some local delinquents, or "market cockroaches" (*kutu pasar*).

14. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:30–32.

15. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:32.

16. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:33. According to M. Yunan Nasution, in 1943 Hamka and he briefly published a monthly magazine under the Japanese called *Semangat Islam* ("Hamka Sebagai Pengarang dan Pujangga," 25). Reid reports that "only one Indonesian-language newspaper was permitted" in each Japanese administrative unit, or *shu* (*Blood of the People*, 108).

17. H. A. R. Sjihab led al-Jamiatul Wasliyah, a religious organization of conservative leanings that rivaled Muhammadiyah in East Sumatra. See Reid, *Blood of the People*, 64, 65.

18. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:38.

19. The story is told in Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:35–39.

20. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:41. Hamka mimics Nakagawa's pronunciation of "Boleh, boleh!" (You may, you may!) by writing "Bore, bore!" Ittihadijah was the third Muslim socioreligious organization active in Medan, alongside (and in competition with) Muhammadiyah and Wasliyah.

21. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:42.

22. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:43.

23. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:43.

24. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:42, 43.

25. Nakashima was a senior professional officer, retired, who had served as military attaché in Paris. See Post et al., *Indonesia in the Pacific War*, 68, 599.

26. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:56.

27. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:56. Ma'djudj and Ja'djudj in Hamka. See Hamka, *Tafsir*, 16:262–263, for varying interpretations.

28. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:60.

29. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:62.

30. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:51.

31. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:63. Reid writes, "Direct access to the senior Japanese officials in each *shu* was the most important index of power, both actual and potential" (*Blood of the People*, 109).

32. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:64. The other speakers included another prewar journalist luminary, Djamaluddin Adinegoro, as well as a Chinese, an Indian, and a Batak speaker.

33. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:67.

34. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:67.

35. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:68. See also Badan Penjiaran Bunka-ka (Medan), *Rapat besar Kaoem Moeslimin Soematera Baroe di Medan Pada 20-6-2603: Boekoe Peringatan Istimewa* (Medan: Badan Penjiaran Bunka-ka, 1943), 4.

36. See Badan Penjiaran Bunka-ka, *Rapat besar Kaoem Moeslimin*, 26.

37. Badan Penjiaran Bunka-ka, *Rapat besar Kaoem Moesliman*, 28.

38. Junan Helmy Nasution, "Serangkum Madah Menyambut Usia 70 Tahun Abuya Prof. Dr. Hamka," in Salam, *70 Tahun*, 232.

39. He is identified as chairman of the occasion and head of its steering committee; he is mentioned repeatedly in the volume's introduction and the opening speech by the propaganda chief T. Hirosawa; and, of course, there is his own speech (along with two photographs). See Badan Penjiaran Bunka-ka, *Rapat besar Kaoem Moesliman*.

40. Not to mention the legions of people who have now seen excerpts of it on YouTube. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:71.

41. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:70. See also Reid, *Blood of the People*, 114; and Badan Penjiaran Bunka-ka, *Rapat besar Kaoem Muslimin*.

42. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:84. Hamka makes clear that he wasn't elected by his peers. The central advisory council in Java was the Chuo Sangi In.

43. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:70.

44. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:77, 80. Other local "movement Islam" organizations were Wasliyah and al-Ittihadiah.

45. Lukman Sinar, whose father was the sultan of Serdang, described this stand-off as a "comprehensive disagreement" (interview, Sinar).

46. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:44.

47. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:70, 77; Badan Penjiaran Bunka-ka, *Rapat besar Kaoem Moesliman*, 27. Anthony Reid describes Hamka as "overestimating his power" and says that he was more successful in uniting the other Muslim organizations, Wasliyah and Ittihadiah, behind Muhammadiyah's position (*Blood of the People*, 114, 115).

48. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:78.

49. See Post et al., *Indonesia in the Pacific War*, 67–68, for a discussion of Japanese economic policies in East Sumatra.

50. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:84.

51. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:84.

52. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:85.

53. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:85.

54. Formally, Pusat Tenaga Rakjat. Putera is an acronym meaning "son" or "prince." See Ricklefs, *History*, 252; Post et al., *Indonesia in the Pacific War*, 41–43.

55. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:87. "By mid-1943," writes Shigeru Sato, "all clothing had disappeared from the open market." By mid-1944, hunger and malnutrition were "acute and widespread." Quoted in Post et al., *Indonesia in the Pacific War*, 267.

56. See Hamka, *Ajahku*, 194; *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:87.

57. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 192–194; Ricklefs, *History*, 253.

58. He also met with Njonja S. K. Trimurti and Ki Bagus Hadikusumo. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:86; Hamka, *Ajahku*, 198–199.

59. Hamka, *Ajahku*, 196.

60. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:88, 90.

61. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:91; Hamka, *Ajahku*, 202, 203. "Bung Karno," or Brother (or Comrade) Karno, is the popular nickname of Sukarno. Hamka often uses it in his memoirs in juxtaposition to Bung Hatta and Bung Haji—himself, of course.

62. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:92–93.

63. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:96–98.

64. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:98; and "Koiso Kuniaki" in Post et al., *Indonesia in the Pacific War*, 531.

65. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:98, 100. Recalling the event seven years afterward, Hamka wrote, "Bung Haji! Bung Haji! You are too honest . . . and stupid."

66. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:109–110.

67. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:124–125.

68. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:131–132.

69. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:136.

70. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:137. The United States' atomic bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki occurred on August 6 and 9, 1945, respectively. See the chronological table of events in Post et al., *Indonesia in the Pacific War*, xxvii.

71. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:138.

72. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:139.

73. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:135, 139.

74. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:141.

75. According to Lukman Sinar, who was there. Interview, Sinar.

76. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:139.

77. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:140.

78. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:142–144, describes the trip. Joesoef Sou'yb pointed out that, in wartime money, ten thousand guilders was not the fortune it might seem. Interview, Sou'yb.

79. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:157, 160. Interview, M. Yunan Nasution.

80. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:170. On the origins of Masjumi (Majelis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia, or the Consultative Council of Indonesian Muslims), see Ricklefs, *History*, 255. Benda is the classic study. See Harry J. Benda, *The Crescent and the Rising Sun: Indonesian Islam under the Japanese Occupation, 1942–1945* (The Hague: W. van Hoeve, 1958), 150–168.

81. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:171.

82. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:171.

83. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 3:173.

84. "Dibandingkan Ombak" (1946), in Hamka, *Tjahaja Baru* (Medan: Pustaka Nasional, 1950), 7–11.

85. Hamka's new books included *Negara Islam* (Padang Panjang: Anwar Rasjid, 1946); *Adat Minangkabau Menghadapi Repoloesi* (Padang Panjang: Anwar Rasjid, 1946); *Repoloesi Agama* (Padang Panjang: Anwar Rasjid, 1946); *Djiwa Merdeka* (Padang Panjang: Koetoeb Chanah, [1946]); and *Islam dan Demokrasi* (Padang Panjang: Anwar Rasjid, 1946). Anwar Rasjid and other publishers also advertised *Moehammadijah melaoei 3 zaman* (Padang Panjang: Anwar Rasjid, 1946); *Repoloesi Pikiran* (Padang Panjang: Poestaka Baroe, [1946]); and *Merdeka* (Padang Panjang: Poestaka Baroe, [1946]). In a back-of-the-book advertisement from Anwar Rasjid in 1946, five out of eighteen books on offer are Hamka's. See Hamka, *Negara Islam*, 105.

86. Hamka, *Negara Islam*, 6, 7.

87. Hamka, *Negara Islam*, 39–41, 82.

88. Hamka, *Negara Islam*, 11.

89. Hamka, *Negara Islam*, 3.

90. Hamka, *Negara Islam*, 33.

91. Hamka, *Negara Islam*, 92.

92. Hamka, *Negara Islam*, 52, 54.

93. Hamka, *Negara Islam*, 54. See pp. 53–55 on Communism and Islam.

94. Hamka, *Negara Islam*, 10.

95. Hamka, *Negara Islam*, 10, 80.

96. Hamka, *Negara Islam*, 10.

97. Hamka, *Negara Islam*, 96.

98. Hamka, *Islam dan Demokrasi*, 47.

99. Hamka, *Islam dan Demokrasi*, 47.

100. Hamka, *Negara Islam*, 57–60.

101. Hamka, *Negara Islam*, 11.

102. Hamka, *Negara Islam*, 100.

103. Hamka, *Negara Islam*, 100.

104. On the Jakarta Charter, see Ricklefs, *History*, 258, 262; R. E. Elson, *The Idea of Indonesia: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 108–109, 113–114.

105. "KeToehanan Jang Maha Esa."

106. Hamka, *Islam dan Demokrasi*, 49.

107. Hamka, *Islam dan Demokrasi*, 49.

108. Hamka, *Negara Islam*, 100.

109. Hamka, *Adat Minangkabau*, 5.

110. Hamka, *Adat Minangkabau*, 5.

111. Hamka, *Adat Minangkabau*, 53.

112. Hamka, *Adat Minangkabau*, 31.

113. Hamka, *Adat Minangkabau*, 31.

114. Hamka, *Adat Minangkabau*, 53, 52, 54.

115. Hamka, *Adat Minangkabau*, 42.

116. Hamka, *Adat Minangkabau*, 27.

117. Hamka, *Adat Minangkabau*, 48.

118. On *rantau*, see Naim, *Merantau*; and Hadler, *Muslims*, 2–4, 148.

119. Hamka, *Adat Minangkabau*, 36.

120. Hamka, *Adat Minangkabau*, 34.

121. Hamka, *Adat Minangkabau*, 35.

122. Hamka, *Adat Minangkabau*, 34.

123. Hamka, *Adat Minangkabau*, 51.

124. Hamka, *Adat Minangkabau*, 53.

125. Hamka, *Adat Minangkabau*, 54.

126. See Reid, *Blood of the People*, 230–233.

127. See Hamka, *Adat Minangkabau*, 59–61; Reid, *Blood of the People*, 232. Lukman Sinar, whose father was the sultan of Serdang, said that Hamka might have provided a moderating influence on this violence if he had remained in Medan and not fled at the war's end. Interview, Sinar.

128. Hamka, *Adat Minangkabau*, 68.

129. Hamka, *Adat Minangkabau*, 68.

130. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 4:8.

131. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 4:48. He was Ketua Majlis Pimpinan Muhammadiyah Daerah Sumatera Barat. See also Hamka, *Muhammadiyah di Minangkabau* (Jakarta: Yayasan Nurul Islam, 1974), 104.

132. As Anthony Reid remarks, Masjumi soon became "Indonesia's biggest political party" (*To Nation by Revolution: Indonesia in the 20th Century* [Singapore, NUS Press, 2011], 15).

133. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 4:9.

134. On the "police action," see Ricklefs, *History*, 276–277; H. Amura, *Sejarah Revolusi Kemerdekaan di Minangkabau, 1945–1950* (Jakarta: Pustaka Antara, 1979), 114–115.

135. Amura, *Sejarah Revolusi*, 113–115; Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 4:82–83.

136. The agreement was signed aboard the USS *Renville*. It adopted a cease-fire line that abandoned several Republican-held enclaves to the Dutch side. See Ricklefs, *History*, 277.

137. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 4:96.

138. This was the Markas Pertahanan Rakjat Daerah (MPRD, or Regional People's Defense Office). Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 4:98, 99.

139. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 4:101–103.

140. The Sumatran Left had not supported the Communist putsch-attempt at Madiun. Moreover, Mohammad Hatta was prime minister at the time. Hamka described him as "Our Mamak" (*Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 4:69, 102). On Madiun, see Ricklefs, *History*, 280–281.

141. See Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 4:126–127.

142. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 4:39–40, 66.

143. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 4:70–75.

144. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 4:74, 75.

145. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 4:75–76, 42. Amura, *Sejarah Revolusi*, 106, repeats the Zola story.

146. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 4:119–124.

147. This period is described in Emzita, "Sekelumit Kenangan dengan Seorang Ulama dan Pujangga Islam Indonesia," in Salam, *70 Tahun*, 95, where Emzita writes of Hamka's ability to delight rural audiences with jokes, suggestive allusions (*sindiran*), *pantun*s, stories, and traditional songs "for hours on end." Irfan Hamka, who was a small boy during these years, later wrote that at the time he thought his father's name was Buya (*Ayah* [Jakarta: Republika, 2013], 28). Here is how John M. Echols and Hassan Shadily define "Buya" in their *Indonesian-English Dictionary*, 3rd edition, revised and edited by John U. Wolff and James T. Collins in cooperation with Hassan Shadily (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 98: "title for respected religious experts and leaders. . . . —*Hamka* Leader Hamka."

148. See Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 4:118–157.

149. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 4:157.

150. Hamka, *Menunggu Beduk Berbunyi* (Jakarta: Pustaka Antara, 1950), 38.

151. See Hamka, *Ajahku*, "Pendahuluan Edisi Pertama"; Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 4:161.

152. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 4:160, 170.

153. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 4:190.

Chapter 4. Islam for Indonesia

1. On August 17, 1950, the Dutch-agreed-upon federal structure of the Republic of the United States of Indonesia was replaced by the unitary Republic of Indonesia under a new constitution.

2. According to one witness, Hamka so pleased the Saudi king in a radio address that the king rewarded him with a gold watch. H. Bachrum Jamil SH, "Hamka dalam Kenangan Hidup," in Salam, *70 Tahun*, 41.

3. In 1958 Hamka was named *guru besar*, or "professor," in Sufism (Ilmu Tasauf) at the Perguruan Tinggi Agama Islam Negara (PTAIN, the National Islamic Teachers College) in Yogyakarta. Mochtar Naim, who took Hamka's course there, found him "head and shoulders above" his other teachers. Interview, Naim.

4. He wrote for publications such as *Abadi*, *Merdeka*, and *Pemandangan*. See Emzita, "Sekelumit Kenangan," 97, 98. H. Fachruddin Ilyas, who lived with the family in the early Jakarta years, says that Hamka "read passionately" until breakfast and then wrote ("Kepribadian Buya Hamka yang Saya Kenal," 281).

5. Sutan Mansur was chair of Pengurus Besar Muhammadiyah. Interview, Sutan Mansur. See also Fachry Ali, "Hamka dan Masyarakat Islam Indonesia," 58. Irfan Hamka recalls that his father was provided a government car (he remembers it as a "merk Sylver Six") and driver (*Ayah*, 33).

6. Emzita, "Sekelumit Kenangan," 98.

7. See Howard M. Federspiel, *Islam and Ideology in the Emerging Indonesian State: The Persatuan Islam (Persis), 1923 to 1957* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 230–232. Increasingly, students read Hamka's books in school, says Sutan Takdir Alisjabana (interview). According to Mahmud Yunus, there were thirty ministry-run Muslim teachers preparatory academies by 1954 (*Sejarah Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia* [Jakarta: Mutiara Sumber Widya, 1992], 392–393).

8. Hamka, *1001 Soal Hidup* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1962 [1940, 1950]); this book was in its sixth printing by 1962. See also Hamka, *Tjahaja Baru* (Medan: Pustaka Nasional Medan, 1950); and Hamka, *Menunggu Beduk Berbunyi* (Jakarta: Pustaka Antara, 1950).

9. Hamka, *Peribadi* (Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Antara, 1968 [1950]).

10. Hamka, *Keadilan Sosial dalam Islam* (Jakarta: Widjaya, 1951); and Hamka, *Falsafah Ideologi Islam* (Jakarta: Widjaya, 1950). In the introduction to *Falsafah Ideologi Islam*, Hamka acknowledges several Egyptian sources, including Ahmad Amin, Sayyid Qutb, Abdul Rahman Hassan Azzam, Shaykh Mustafa Abd al-Raziq ("the former rector of Al-Azhar"), and a certain Dr. Madkour, plus "several other writers" (4). Hamka's *Keadilan Sosial dalam Islam* was also influenced by Sayyid Qutb, who wrote a book of the same name in 1948: *Al-'Adalah al-Ijtima'iyyah fi al-Islam* (Social justice in Islam). See Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb*.

11. Hamka's *Perkembangan Tasauf dari Abad ke Abad* was published in 1952 and republished in 1958 as part of *Tasauf: Perkembangan dan Permurniannya* (Jakarta: Yayasan Nurul Islam, 1958); see Hamka, "Pengantar Penerbit" (Publisher's introduction), in *Tasauf*, n.p.

12. Hamka, *Sejarah Umat Islam* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1981 [1950]), 1 and subsequent volumes.

13. See Amura, "Dengan Buya Hamka dalam Berbagai Peristiwa," 211. Among those attending were Sutan Takdir Alisjabana, Armijn Pane, and Trisno Sumardjo. Ki Hadjar Dewantoro sent a paper.

14. Hamka, *Falsafah Ideologi*, 6.

15. Hamka, *Falsafah Ideologi*, 7.

16. Hamka, *Falsafah Ideologi*, 11. He also mentions Communist activists such as Alimin and Darsono.

17. Hamka, *Falsafah Ideologi*, 12. See Anderson's discussion of *pesantren* during periods of conflict in Benedict R. O'Gorman Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution: Occupation and Resistance, 1944–1946* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1972), 5–7, 9–10.

18. Hamka, *Falsafah Ideologi*, 13. Hamka cites Tan Malaka's *Gerilja, Politik, Ekonomi* and *Dari Pendjara ke Pendjara*.

19. Hamka, *Falsafah Ideologi*, 49, 53.

20. Hamka, *Falsafah Ideologi*, 23, 24.

21. Hamka discusses this at length (*Falsafah Ideologi*, 28).

22. See Ricklefs, *History*, 296–297.

23. Hamka, *Falsafah Ideologi*, 102.

24. Hamka, *Falsafah Ideologi*, 131.

25. Hamka, *Falsafah Ideologi*, 95, 96.

26. Hamka, *Falsafah Ideologi*, 96.

27. Hamka, *Falsafah Ideologi*, 94; Qur'an 28:76–81.

28. He lists *sedekah*, *hadiah*, *hibah*, *wakaf*, *dana*, *permberian*, *tanda mata*, *tanda putih hati*, *tanda djasa*, and *tanda sayang* (Hamka, *Falsafah Ideologi*, 104).

29. Hamka, *Falsafah Ideologi*, 51.

30. Hamka, *Falsafah Ideologi*, 33.

31. Hamka, *Falsafah Ideologi*, 84, 78.

32. Hamka, *Falsafah Ideologi*, 110.

33. Hamka, *Falsafah Ideologi*, 41, 67. Recall that Hamka had used exactly this metaphor to describe the historical accommodation of Islam and Minangkabau customary laws, or *adat*.

34. Hamka, *Falsafah Ideologi*, 55–57.

35. Hamka, *Peribadi*, 1.

36. Or their "strong personality." Hamka writes that his use of the word *peribadi* is a contraction of *diri peribadi*, which came into use during the revolution to capture the meaning of the English word "personality" or the Dutch *persoonlijkheid* (*Peribadi*, 3).

37. Hamka, *Peribadi*, 116.

38. Hamka, *Peribadi*, 8.

39. Hamka, *Peribadi*, 38.

40. Hamka, *Peribadi*, 67–68.

41. Hamka, *Peribadi*, 24. The word *jiwa*, or "spirit," may also be rendered as "soul."

42. On Ibn Taymiya (Ibn-Taymiyyah), see Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, 2:422, 471; Martin and Woodward, *Defenders of Reason*, 123–126.

43. Hamka, *Peribadi*, 43, 84.

44. Hamka, *Peribadi*, 74.

45. Hamka, *Peribadi*, 71.

46. Hamka, *Peribadi*, 79.

47. Hamka, *Peribadi*, 102.

48. Hamka, *Peribadi*, 119, 120.

49. Hamka, "Kebudayaan Daerah," *Haluan*, April 14, 1951, in "Demokrasi, Otonomi, dan Gerakan Daerah: Pemikiran Politik Orang Minang Tahun 1950-an," ed. Gusti Asnan (2004), 167. Unpublished manuscript kindly provided by Gusti Asnan.

50. Asnan, "Pemikiran Politik," 168.

51. Asnan, "Pemikiran Politik," 169.

52. In a characteristic aside, he remembers being thrilled when he was a boy by girls who were brought into the village to sing popular Minangkabau songs accompanied by gongs. These "goddesses" and "angels from heaven" made his hair stand on end. "How can this be called *haram*?" (Asnan, "Pemikiran Politik," 174).

53. Asnan, "Pemikiran Politik," 175.

54. Asnan, "Pemikiran Politik," 177.

55. Hamka, *Mandi Cahaya di Tanah Suci* (ca. 1951); *Tindjauan di Lembah Nijl* (Jakarta: Gapura, 1951). See also Hamka, "Ditepi Sungai Dajlah," prepublication manuscript, Pusat Dokumentasi H. B. Jassin. His book about his seven-day trip to Egypt in October 1950 went on for 155 pages!

56. Hamka, "Sungai Dajlah," 12, 127.

57. Hamka, "Sungai Dajlah," 16.

58. Hamka, *Nijl*, 25.

59. Hamka, *Nijl*, 23.

60. Hamka, *Nijl*, 23–24. Hamka writes that 90 percent of the books used at the Sumatra Thawalib were from Egypt.

61. Hamka, *Nijl*, 24, 25.

62. Hamka, *Nijl*, 24, 82.

63. Hamka, *Nijl*, 83–87, 86.

64. See Hamka, *Nijl*, 40–61. Nadav Safran identifies all four of these men as leading "liberal intellectuals" of early twentieth-century Egypt (*Egypt*, 125–140). See also Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 325; Kate Zebiri, *Maḥmūd Shaltūt and Islamic Modernism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 2. Hamka evidently did not meet Sayyid Qutb during his 1950 trip, but it was perhaps at this time that he acquired a copy of Qutb's new book, *Al-'Adalah al-Ijtima'iyyah fi al-Islam* (Social justice in Islam). As I have noted, Hamka published his own book by that title in 1951. Hairus Salim discusses Hamka's connections to Egypt in Hairus Salim (H.S.), "Indonesian Muslims and Cultural Networks," in *Heirs to World Culture: Being Indonesian 1950–1965*, ed. Jennifer Lindsay and Maya H. T. Liem (Leiden: KITLV, 2012), 75–118.

65. Hamka, *Nijl*, 142–145.

66. Hamka, "Sungai Dajlah," 122; Hamka, *Nijl*, 39.

67. Hamka, "Sungai Dajlah," 116.

68. Hamka, "Sungai Dajlah," 109.

69. Hamka, *Nijl*, 103.

70. Hamka, *Nijl*, 103; Hamka, "Sungai Dajlah," 109–112.

71. Hamka, "Sungai Dajlah," 110, 112.

72. Hamka, *Nijl*, 102, 103. In 1952 Gamal Abdel Nasser and his Free Officers orchestrated a coup d'état that overthrew the Wafd Party–led constitutional monarchy that was in power when Hamka visited.

73. Hamka, *Nijl*, 103.

74. Hamka, *Nijl*, 104.

75. Hamka, "Sungai Dajlah," 116. Hamka calls these new classes Neo-Priyayi, Neo-Kyai, and Neo-Militarists.

76. Hamka, "Sungai Dajlah," 116.

77. Hamka, *Nijl*, 118.

78. Hamka, *Nijl*, 101.

79. Hamka, *Nijl*, 130–131.

80. Hamka, *Empat Bulan di Amerika* (Jakarta: Tintamas, 1954), 1:5. Hamka visited the United States as a guest of the U.S. State Department through the United States Information Service (USIS). See Emzita, "Sekelumit Kenangan," 102.

81. See Hamka, *Empat Bulan*, 2:5–6, 52.

82. Hamka, *Empat Bulan*, 1:98, 2:38.

83. See Hamka, *Empat Bulan*, 2:80.

84. Hamka, *Empat Bulan*, 2:53. But when he encountered Indonesians who had become too American, he wrote privately to Emzita, he "wanted to throw up" (Emzita, "Sekelumit Kenangan," 102).

85. Hamka, *Empat Bulan*, 2:17.

86. Hamka, *Empat Bulan*, 2:39–40.

87. Hamka, *Empat Bulan*, 1:116–117.

88. Hamka, *Empat Bulan*, 1:122–123.

89. Hamka, *Empat Bulan*, 2:25.

90. Hamka, *Empat Bulan*, 2:31. Hamka speaks of *obat pentjegah hamil* (contraceptives), although this was before the commercial introduction of modern birth control pills.

91. Hamka, *Empat Bulan*, 2:97.

92. Hamka, *Empat Bulan*, 2:97. He is referring to the "golden age" of Islam between the eighth and thirteenth centuries under the Abbasid Caliphate.

93. Hamka, *Empat Bulan*, 2:64, 65.

94. See the photograph in Hamka, *Nijl*, 28, in which he is, typically, having a smoke.

95. Hamka, *Nijl*, 20–22.

96. Hamka, *Empat Bulan*, 2:130.

97. Hamka, *Pelajaran Agama Islam* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1961 [1956]), 18. Dawam Rahardjo has called Hamka's *Lessons* "an important . . . and very daring book" ("Agama dalam Masyarakat Modern: Pandangan Hamka Sebagai Ulama dan Pujangga," in *Intelektual, Inteligensia*, 200, 211).

98. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 17. *Aqal* here implies approaching the Qur'an and Hadith through rational thought; *naqal* suggests a literal interpretation of the scriptures.

99. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 13.

100. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 14.

101. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 13–14; Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, 1:384–385. See also Sirriyeh, *Sufis and Anti-Sufis*, chap. 4, "The Sufism and Anti-Sufism of the Salafis," on the influence of al-Ghazali.

102. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 14.

103. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 14.

104. Hamka also cites the Al-Maturidi school alongside the Asharites. See Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 62; see also Yusuf, "Corak Pemikiran Kalam," 9–10.

105. See Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 14, 52–55.

106. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 188–189.
107. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 292, 287.
108. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 298.
109. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 287.
110. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 293.
111. For the full discussion, see Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 296–303.
112. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 306–307.
113. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 305.
114. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 305–306.
115. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 306.
116. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 303.
117. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 303–304.
118. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 303.
119. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 306.
120. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 47, 86, 83, 31 (quotation).
121. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 29.
122. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 52.
123. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 28.
124. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 28.
125. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 63, 65, 66.
126. Yusuf, "Corak Pemikiran Kalam," 154, 156–157.
127. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 66, 225, 228–30.
128. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 76.
129. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 78. This experience made a deep impression, and he retold the story repeatedly. The original is in Hamka, *Nijl*, 121.
130. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 186. This same story is told about revered *ulama*s in Java, Makassar, Aceh, and Minangkabau. See below.
131. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 186.
132. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 187. Hamka takes some time to explain how Muslim scholars categorize the Hadith—accounts of the life and words of the Prophet Muhammad—according to their reliability, from authoritative (Shahih) to utterly unreliable (Maudhu'). See Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 162, 187.
133. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 120–127.
134. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 116.
135. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 114–119, 117.
136. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 114, 119.
137. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 169.
138. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 80.
139. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 12.
140. See Rahardjo, "Agama dalam Masyarakat Modern," 200–201; H. M. Iskandar, "Pemikiran Hamka Tentang Dakwah" (PhD diss., Institut Agama Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, 2001), 453–455, 457; Yusuf, "Corak Pemikiran Kalam," 239.

141. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 366–367.

142. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 377.

143. Hamka, *Pelajaran*, 13.

144. Hamka, *Sedjarah Umat Islam* (Jakarta: N. V. Nusantara, 1961), "Pendahuluan" for the 1950 edition. The 1961 edition compiled all four volumes of the series. Depending upon the year of publication/printing, "history" in the title is spelled either *sedjarah* or *sejarah*.

145. In Solo, Yogyakarta, Medan, and Jakarta. See Hamka, *Sedjarah*, "Pendahuluan Tjetakan ke-III." See also Howard Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam: Islamic Reform in Twentieth Century Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Modern Indonesia Project, Cornell University, 1970), 230–232, on the expansion of Muslim education and the first Perguruan Tinggi Islam Negeri (PTAIN) in Jakarta and Yogyakarta.

146. Hamka, *Sejarah Umat Islam* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1975 [1952]), 2:7.

147. Abdurrahman Wahid compared him to Will Durant (interview).

148. Hamka, *Sedjarah*, "Pendahuluan."

149. Hamka, *Sedjarah*, "Pendahuluan Djilid IV," n.p. He mentions *Sejarah Cirebon*, *Babad Gianti*, and others. Karel Steenbrink writes that, as a writer of history, Hamka "seldom mentions his sources and does not show any critical attitude toward conventional ideas in this field. On the other hand, his writing of history is very lively and always has the practical goal of edifying" ("Hamka [1908–1981] and the Integration of the Umat Islam of Indonesia," *Studia Islamica* 1, no. 3 [Jakarta, 1994]: 12).

150. Noer, "Yamin and Hamka," 253.

151. Hamka, *Sedjarah*, 670, 732. Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan (661–680) was the first Umayyad caliph. Hamka elsewhere gives the date as 684 CE, a not altogether uncommon example of his hasty writing. See Hamka, *Sedjarah*, 680.

152. Hamka, *Sedjarah*, 670.

153. Hamka, *Sedjarah*, 674. On the early Arab penetration of Southeast Asia, Hamka cites the work of Sir Thomas Arnold, who in turn, he says, cites "W. P. Groeneveldt, 'Notes on the Malay Archipelago and Malacca, compiled from Chinese Sources' (Vert. Bataviasche Genootshap van K. dan W. Deel . . . 1880)" (Hamka, *Sedjarah*, 661). This is about as close to a scholarly citation that one will encounter in Hamka's writing.

154. Hamka, *Sedjarah*, 675, 677, 681.

155. In Pasai Samudra. See Hamka, *Sedjarah*, 671.

156. Hamka, *Sedjarah*, 749–750, 683–684.

157. Discussed in detail in Hamka, *Sedjarah*, 741–806.

158. Hamka, *Sedjarah*, 686.

159. Hamka, *Sedjarah*, 921.

160. Hamka, *Sedjarah*, 806.

161. Hamka, *Sedjarah*, 690. Hamka also refers to the achievement of independence in Malaya and the Philippines. In March 1963 Hamka participated in a seminar on the history of Islam in Indonesia featuring several prominent historians and intellectuals.

The official conclusions of the seminar mirrored almost exactly the broad narrative that Hamka laid out in volume 4 of his *Sejarah Umat Islam*. See A. Hasjmy, ed., *Sejarah Masuk dan Berkembangnya Islam di Indonesia* (Jakarta: PT Al-Maarif Penerbit Percetakan Offset, 1981), 7. In 1974 Hamka published a short history of Muhammadiyah in Minangkabau: *Muhammadiyah di Minangkabau* (Jakarta: Yayasan Nurul Islam, 1974).

162. See Emzita, "Sekelumit Kenangan," 99.

163. See Emzita, "Sekelumit Kenangan," 99. Mohammad Roem said he was a member of the Majelis Syura, perhaps reflecting a later period (interview).

164. Interview, Roem. Attended by, among others, Mohammad Roem, Mohammad Natsir, Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, Anwar Haryono, and Burhanuddin Harahap.

165. See Ricklefs, *History*, 293.

166. See Ricklefs, *Mystic Synthesis*.

167. Ricklefs says that during the revolution "some Masyumi leaders were . . . sympathetic towards it" (*History*, 279).

168. Hamka to Emzita, February 19, 1952, in Emzita, "Sekelumit Kenangan," 99.

169. Hamka to Emzita, June 6, 1954, in Emzita, "Sekelumit Kenangan," 100. Ricklefs writes that in their private lives the Masjumi leaders were devoted to God, and "in politics their devotion was to Indonesia" (*History*, 293).

170. Hamka to Emzita, June 6, 1954, in Emzita, "Sekelumit Kenangan," 100.

171. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 4:65.

172. See Elson, *Idea*, chap. 4.

173. See "The 'Pantja Sila,'" in *The World of Southeast Asia: Selected Readings*, ed. Harry J. Benda and John A. Larkin (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 245–248.

174. Ricklefs, *History*, 293–294, 302.

175. As Hamka often pointed out, Tan Malaka, leader of a competing Marxist party called Murba, or Proletarian, did not take this view. See Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 4:67.

176. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 4:35–36, 103.

177. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 4:103. On Xarim M. S., see Reid, *Blood of the People*, 79n74.

178. Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 4:128.

179. B.S., "Hamka bisa Basa Asing," *Harian Rakjat*, October 23, 1954. Such efforts to belittle Hamka are one measure of his stature.

180. See Amura, "Dengan Buya Hamka dalam Berbagai Peristiwa" 211–212; Sidi Gazalba, "Beberapa Peristiwa Bersama Buya Hamka," in Salam, *70 Tahun*, 224–226.

181. Several other parties competed, with none capturing more than 2.9 percent (PSII) and with Sutan Sjahrir's intellectually inclined Socialists, the Indonesian Socialist Party (PSI), gaining only 2 percent, a stunning electoral failure. See Herbert Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1962), 434.

182. Ricklefs, *History*, 308.

183. Ricklefs, *History*, 308.

184. Interview, Ahmad. This applied to other Muhammadiyah leaders as well.

185. See Mohammad Natsir, "Dua Kali Kami Berjumpa," in Salam, *70 Tahun*, 5.

186. Elson, *Idea*, 207, 208.

187. Elson, *Idea*, 121n88, 138. Ricklefs writes that Masjumi "never officially placed the idea of an Islamic state among its priorities in the 1950s" (*History*, 293).

188. The constitution it was mandated to replace was the provisional unitary constitution of 1950, which followed the federal constitution of 1949, both of which had superseded the original revolutionary constitution of 1945. See Elson, *Idea*, 151.

189. Quoted in Deliar Noer, "Hamka dan Sejarah," in Salam, *70 Tahun*, 115.

190. Noer, "Hamka dan Sejarah," 114.

191. Noer, "Hamka dan Sejarah," 115.

192. Noer, "Hamka dan Sejarah," 115. See also the speech "We Are Moving toward a Republic of Indonesia Based on Islam" by Isa Anshary in the constitutional assembly, expressing these same thoughts, in Benda and Larkin, *Southeast Asia*, 250–254.

193. See Ali Munhanif, "Mohammad Natsir: Pemandu Politik dan Dakwah," in *Tokoh dan Pemimpin Agama: Biografi Sosial-intelektual*, ed. Azyumardi Azra and Saiful Umam (Jakarta: Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat, PPIM, 1998), 220; Emzita, "Sekelumit Kenangan," 99.

194. Natsir, "Dua Kali Kami Berjumpa," 6.

195. Ricklefs, *History*, 309, 310.

196. Ricklefs, *History*, 310.

197. Ricklefs, *History*, 314–316.

198. H. Bahrum Jamil S. H., "Hamka dalam Kenangan Hidup," in Salam, *70 Tahun*, 43.

199. See Elson, *Idea*, 195–196; Audrey R. Kahin, *Islam, Nationalism, and Democracy: A Political Biography of Mohammad Natsir* (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2012), 118–138. See also Asnan, *Kamus*, 231–235. Both Sjafruddin and Natsir had served as prime ministers of the Republic. Natsir and Burhanuddin were members of the PRRI cabinet.

200. Allan A. Samson, "Army and Islam in Indonesia," *Pacific Affairs* 44 (1971–1972): 547.

201. See Audrey R. Kahin and George McT. Kahin, *Subversion as Foreign Policy: The Secret Eisenhower and Dulles Debacle in Indonesia* (New York: New Press, 1995); Ricklefs, *History*, 318–319; Elson, *Idea*, 178.

202. Ricklefs, *History*, 319.

203. Hamka, "Tinjauan Sejarah Kembali," *Haluan*, January 17, 1957, in Asnan, "Pemikiran Politik," 189.

204. Natsir recalled hearing this over PRRI rebel radio in West Sumatra ("Dua Kali Kami Berjumpa," 6). He responded with a poem.

205. Ricklefs, *History*, 321.

206. Noer, "Hamka dan Sejarah," 116.

207. Ricklefs, *History*, 325.

Chapter 5. Culture Wars

1. Sjahlan, "Nasehat yang Tulus Ikhlas," 73.

2. Ilyas, "Kepribadian Buya Hamka," 281. Zaki, Rusydi, Fakhri, Irfan, Azizah, Aliyah, and Fathiyah were born in Sumatra; Hilmi, Afif, and Syakib were born in Jakarta.

3. Ilyas, "Kepribadian Buya Hamka," 280–281; Ichsanuddin Ilyas, "Sekelumit Catatan Tentang Pengalaman Terhadap Hamka dalam Rangka Peringatan Usia 70 Tahun," in Salam, *70 Tahun*, 263, 265.

4. Ilyas, "Kepribadian Buya Hamka," 281. Emzita is among the many who comment on Siti Raham's cooking ("Sekelumit Kenangan," 97).

5. Sjahlan, "Nasehat yang Tulus Ikhlas," 73–74.

6. Sjahlan, "Nasehat yang Tulus Ikhlas," 74.

7. According to his son Rusydi, Hamka took on a considerable debt to do so.

8. Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1982 [1967]), 1:55.

9. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:58–59.

10. Muhammad Nazar, "Telektualitas Dakwah Prof. Doktor Hamka: Kajian tentang Konsep dan Pendekatan" (PhD diss., Institut Agama Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah, 2000), 189.

11. Or sometimes Prof. Dr. H. Abdulmalik Karim Amrullah (Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:59). See also "Utjapan Sjukur dan Terimakasih," *Panji Masyarakat*, September 1, 1959, 4; and "Sebab Panji Masyarakat," *Panji Masyarakat*, June 15, 1959, 2. In 1958 Hamka was inaugurated as Guru Besar Ilmu Tasauf at the Perguruan Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri (PTAIN) in Yogyakarta. See Hamka, *Tasauf: Perkembangan*, Pengantar Penerbit.

12. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:62. Maḥmūd Shaltūt was an Abduh-influenced modernist and a significant reformer of the Al-Azhar in Egypt (Zebiri, *Maḥmūd Shaltūt*, 11–12, 26–28).

13. *Dakwah* means "to call, summon, or invite." See Asna Husin, "Philosophical and Sociological Aspects of Da'wah: a Study of Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1998), 15.

14. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 159.

15. Interview, Taufik Abdullah; Nazar, "Telektualitas Dakwah," 273.

16. Among these were Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (HMI), Pelajar Islam Indonesia (PII), Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia (PMII), and Ikatan Mahasiswa Muhammadiyah (IMM). See H. Amiruddin Siregar, "Mengenang Almarhum Prof. Dr. Hamka," in *Perjalanan Terakir Buya Hamka* (Jakarta: Penerbit Panji Masyarakat, 1981), 153.

17. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 158; interview, Hasan Basri.

18. "Sebab Panji Masjarakat diterbitkan," *Panji Masyarakat*, June 15, 1959, 2.

19. "Sebab Panji Masyarakat diterbitkan," *Panji Masyarakat*, June 15, 1959, 2.

20. Sidi Gazalba writes that the name *Panji Masyarakat* was a deliberate conflation of *Pandji Islam* and *Pedoman Masjarakat*, the two rival prewar Muslim weeklies in Medan ("Beberapa Peristiwa Bersama Buya Hamka," 226).

21. "Pandangan Hidup Islam"; "Tanja-Djawab"; "Masjarakat Kita"; "Tindjauan luar negeri"; and "Bahasa dan Sastra." See *Panji Masyarakat*, June 15, 1959.

22. See H. M. Jusuf Ahmad, "Setahun Pandjimas," *Panji Masyarakat*, June 15, 1960, 5. Ahmad was *pemimpin usaha* (general manager) at the magazine.

23. See the figures in *Panji Masyarakat*, July 1, 1960, 31, September 1, 1960, 31, and July 15, 1960, 30.

24. Henk Maier writes that *Panji Masyarakat* "immediately acquired great prestige in Muslim circles and beyond" (*We Are Playing Relatives*, 381).

25. "Chittah Pandji Masjarakat," *Panji Masyarakat*, October 15, 1959, 27.

26. See, for example, *Panji Masyarakat*, October 15, 1959, 27, and June 15, 1960, 6, 7.

27. Hamka also mentions the parties Partai Sarekat Islam and Perti and the organizations Muhammadiyah, Al-Djamijatal Washlijah, Persatuan Islam, Persatuan Ummat Islam, and Al-Irsjad. See "Chittah Pandji Masjarakat," *Panji Masyarakat*, October 15, 1959, 27.

28. "Kebudajaan Arab atau Kebudajaan Islam," *Panji Masjarakat*, February 1, 1960, 3.

29. "Kebudajaan Arab atau Kebudajaan Islam," *Panji Masjarakat*, February 1, 1960, 3.

30. "Kebudajaan Arab atau Kebudajaan Islam," *Panji Masjarakat*, February 1, 1960, 3. The Indonesian census of 1971 revealed a count of 103.5 million Muslims and 8.6 million Christians. Cited in Noer, "Yamin and Hamka," 256n25.

31. "Semua 'Sesuai,'" *Panji Masyarakat*, May 1, 1960, 2.

32. "Semua 'Sesuai,'" *Panji Masyarakat*, May 1, 1960, 2.

33. Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (DPR)–Gotong Royong.

34. A. Syafii Maarif, *Islam dan Politik di Indonesia pada Masa Demokrasi Terpimpin (1959–1965)* (Yogyakarta: IAIN Sunan Kalijaga Press, 1988), 61–63. Ricklefs says that between 17 and 25 percent of the members were Communists (*History*, 324). According to Rex Mortimer, the PKI also publicly opposed the Sukarno-appointed DPR-Gotong Royong, calling instead for fresh elections. See Rex Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism under Sukarno: Ideology and Politics, 1959–1965* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974), 121–122.

35. Ikatan Pendukung Kemerdekaan Indonesia (IPKI) was founded by General Nasution and declared itself in favor; Nasution declared himself neutral. See Maarif, *Islam dan Politik*, 64. Mortimer says the Democratic League "enjoyed the active support of some army members and the tolerance of wider circles, including Nasution" (*Indonesian Communism*, 112).

36. This went against the advice of his son Rusydi, who managed the magazine and who was aghast when he read Hatta's provocative article (interview).

37. Mohammad Hatta, "Demokrasi Kita," *Panji Masyarakat*, May 1, 1960, 5.

38. Hatta, "Demokrasi Kita," 4.

39. Hatta, "Demokrasi Kita," 8.

40. Hatta, "Demokrasi Kita," 8.

41. See Jusuf Ahmad, "Setahun Pandjimas," *Panji Masyarakat*, June 15, 1960, 7.

42. The PSI, or Socialist Party, of Sutan Sjahrir was also banned. See Maarif, *Islam dan Politik*, 79; "Dari Tata Usaha," *Panji Masyarakat*, October 15, 1960, 2; Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 158.

43. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 158; Gazalba, "Beberapa Peristiwa Bersama Buya Hamka," 226. Ricklefs reports that "between 1959 and 1961 newspaper circulation was cut by about one third, from 1,039,000 copies for ninety dailies to 710,000 copies for sixty-five dailies" (*History*, 323).

44. The official outlets were Antara, the government news agency, and Radio Republic Indonesia (RRI). The leading left-leaning and Communist papers in the capital were *Bintang Timur* and *Harian Rakjat*. See Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 158.

45. Harold A. Crouch, *The Army and Politics in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), 29–30.

46. Crouch, *Army and Politics*, 26, 30–35.

47. Crouch, *Army and Politics*, 30.

48. Crouch, *Army and Politics*, 34; Robert W. Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 45.

49. Ricklefs, *History*, 302.

50. Ricklefs, *History*, 303.

51. Donald Hindley, *The Communist Party of Indonesia, 1951–1963* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), 285. See also Adrian Vickers, *A History of Modern Indonesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 153.

52. See Hindley, *Communist Party*, 285, which gives "7.8 to 12.0 million" for the four major Communist mass organizations as of 1963.

53. See Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism*, 63–64, 104, 305.

54. Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism*, 157.

55. Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism*, 156; Maarif, *Islam dan Politik*, 168.

56. In Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism*, 120.

57. See Crouch, *Army and Politics*, 34.

58. Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 45.

59. Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 48.

60. Interview, Hasan Basri.

61. The staff college is Sekolah Staf dan Komando Angkatan Darat (Seskoad). Rowi was head of Pusroh (Pusat Rawatan Rohani) Islam, Angkatan Darat, Jakarta. Sudirman and Rowi had roots in the Brawidjaja Division of East Java. See Samson, "Army and Islam," 547.

62. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 159.

63. Nasution was then commander of the armed forces of Indonesia (*panglima ABRI*) and minister of defense.

64. See *Gema Islam*, November 11, 1961, 9, 21; Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 159. Sukarno met Fatmawati's father—and subsequently Fatmawati herself—through the Muhammadiyah community in Bengkulu in the late 1930s, when he was still in exile.

She became his second wife. Despite other subsequent wives, she remained officially first lady and an important public figure and a link to the Muslim community. See Bob Hering, *Soekarno: Founding Father of Indonesia, 1901–1945* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002), 274–275; Sukarno, *Sukarno: An Autobiography, as Told to Cindy Adams* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), 139–143.

65. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 159.

66. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 160.

67. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 160. For his part, Rusydi became editorial secretary. Rusydi gives the initial amount from Nasution as 150,000 rupiah (ca. 1962) (interview). Nasution said that these funds came from his discretionary budget (*dana2 tidak resmi*) as minister of security (*mentri keamanan*) (interview). Hairus Salim points out that Nahdlatul Ulama and Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia intellectuals were also on *Gema Islam*'s editorial board ("Indonesian Muslims and Cultural Networks," 88).

68. *Gema Islam*, January 15, 1962, 4.

69. Mohammad Roem, "Perpisahan Agama dan Negara," *Gema Islam*, January 15, 1962, 6. Roem takes up the problem of Catholicism in the American presidential campaign of John F. Kennedy.

70. Rusydi Hamka, "Sedjarah penerbitan madjalah Al-Munir," *Gema Islam*, January 15, 1962, 22–23.

71. "Sail away, sail away; we can only bring you this far on this cool January night" (*Gema Islam*, January 15, 1962, 10).

72. Amura, "Musjawarah Besar Seniman dan Kebudajaan Islam," *Gema Islam*, January 15, 1962, 25.

73. Amura, "Musjawarah Besar Seniman dan Kebudajaan Islam," *Gema Islam*, January 15, 1962, 26.

74. Hamka, "Kebudjaan Islam adalah Mazhar dari Tauhid dan Taqwa," *Gema Islam*, January 15, 1962, 14.

75. Hamka, "Kebudjaan Islam," 12. The phrase "you-can-see" is in English, as is "Bomb Atom."

76. Hamka, "Kebudjaan Islam," 13.

77. Hamka, "Kebudjaan Islam," 14.

78. M. R. Rowi, "Tri Komando Rakjat," *Gema Islam*, January 15, 1962, 1–2.

79. Isa Anshary was also detained. See Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 161; M. Yunan Nasution, *Kenang-kenangan Dibelakang Terali Besi Dizaman Rezim Orla* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1967), 13–15; Rosihan Anwar, *Sebelum Prahara: Pergolakan Politik Indonesia, 1961–1965* (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1981), 154–155.

80. M. Yunan Nasution was a former member of parliament; Anak Agung Gde Agung, a former foreign minister.

81. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 161. Rosihan Anwar, who also wrote for *Gema Islam*, noted in his diary that his own military contacts confirmed that the orders came directly from Sukarno (*Prahara*, 164–165). In an interview in 1982, A. H. Nasution confirmed this, saying that he had been bypassed and "outranked" by Sukarno (interview).

In July 1962 Sukarno reorganized the military to curtail Nasution's power. See Crouch, *Army and Politics*, 52–53.

82. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 161.

83. Interview, Rusydi; Siregar, "Mengenang Almarhum Prof. Dr. Hamka," 155.

84. Nasution, *Terali Besi*, 53.

85. Watson, *Of Self and Nation*, 112.

86. Abdullah S. P. [Said Patmadji], "Hamka: Benarkah dia Manfaluthi Indonesia?," *Bintang Timur*, September 7, 1962.

87. "Idea Script Atau Gagasan Jang Disarikan Dari Perbandingan Kalimat Demi Kalimat Jang Tersusun Berturut Dalam Bentuk Surat," *Bintang Timur*, September 7, 1962. No author is given.

88. A. S., "Satu Hidangan: Hamka Punja Tjerita," *Bintang Timur*, September 7, 1962.

89. Pramoedya Ananta Toer told me that he had heard such stories about "such and such a book from Medan," for example (interview, Pramoedya). Mohammad Rasjidi, who earned his doctorate at the Sorbonne and was an expert in Islamic law, told me that Hamka's writing was all lifted from Arabic books and magazines; this "was obvious to anyone who knew the literature," he said (interview). H. B. Jassin confirmed that Hamka was "made fun of" by people in high literary circles (interview).

90. Hamka, *Nijl*, 86.

91. Mochtar Naim made this point, among others (interview). Mohammad Rasjidi also acknowledged that this was, in fact, the tradition (interview). And Jeffrey Hadler has this interesting comment: "Hamka's arguing that the Malay world does not have a western concept of authority in many ways anticipated the notion of 'orality' popularized in the 1980s" ("Home, Fatherhood, Succession," 124n).

92. See the note in *Tasauf Modern* (2nd Malaysian edition, 1976), xi. Footnotes are common in *Pedoman Masjarakat* but inconsistent, as in many of his other books, including *Sejarah Umat Islam*.

93. Solichin Salam, "Berkenalan dengan Buya Hamka," in Salam, *70 Tahun*, 243. Hamka's letter to Solichin is dated July 5, 1961.

94. *Al-'Adalah al-Ijtima'iyyah fi al-Islam*, for example, by Sayid Qutb, from which Hamka acknowledges he borrowed the title *Keadilan Social Dalam Islam* (Social justice in Islam). See Solichin, "Berkenalan dengan Buya Hamka," 243. Ironically, Qutb himself was accused of "pirating" the ideas of Abu al-Ala Mawdudi and others. See Abu-Rabi, *Intellectual Origins*, 139, 164.

95. Solichin, "Berkenalan dengan Buya Hamka," 243.

96. Solichin, "Berkenalan dengan Buya Hamka," 243, 244.

97. See "Sensasi dalam bidang kesusastraan," *Berita Minggu*, September 30, 1962. In 1982 Pramoedya recalled that he had formed a four-person panel to examine the claims of Abdullah S. P. and found them convincing. Hamka didn't need to cheat, he said; "he was talented enough" (interview, Pramoedya). Pramoedya's coeditor of Lentera was S. Rukiah.

98. Quoted in "Hamka dituduh plagiator," *Berita Minggu*, September 30, 1962.

99. Quoted in "Hamka dituduh plagiator," *Berita Minggu*, September 30, 1962.

100. "Sambutan Hamka atas heboh mengenai 'Tenggelamnja Kapal vd Wijk,'" *Gema Islam*, October 1, 1962, 25.

101. See, for example, the comments by Usmar Ismail, Anas Ma'ruf, and Ali Audah in "Heboh 'Tenggelamnja Kapal van der Wijk,'" *Berita Minggu*, October 7, 1962; Rusydi [Hamka], "'Tenggelamnja Kapal van der Wijk' Apakah suatu karja plagiat?," *Gema Islam*, October 1, 1962, and October 15, 1962; and M. Junus Amir Hamzah, "Tenggelamnja Kapal v.d. Wijk," *Gema Islam*, October 15, 1962.

102. See, for example, "Mumpung Bulan Puasa, Buja," *Bintang Timur*, January 19, 1964.

103. M. Thaib, "Affam, Salah Seorang Pudjangga dari Benua Dibawah Angin," *Kisah*, August 1955, 4–6. Jassin later published a poetic Indonesian rendering of the Qur'an, *Al-Quranu 'l-Karim: Bacaan Mulia* (Jakarta: Penerbit Djambatan, 1978).

104. H. B. Jassin, "Prakata," in *Magdalena: Terdjemahan "Madjdulin" Mustafa Luthfi al-Manfaluthi*, trans. A. S. Alatas (Jakarta: Kirana, 1963), xiv.

105. Jassin, "Prakata," xiv. Here one might take note of M. C. Ricklefs's comments, following P. J. Zoetmulder, about how in earlier centuries, "Indian epics were adopted into Old Javanese, but the settings [e.g., "the time divisions of the day, the seasons, and the flora and fauna"] were Javanized and various styles and particularities were altered to meet the requirements of Old Javanese poetry (*kakawin*)." In this way, he writes, "the *Ramayana* and the *Bharatayuddha* . . . had become Javanese works of literature" (Ricklefs, *Mystic Synthesis*, 8–9). One might also recall, thinking of other Southeast Asian examples, that Vietnam's iconic *Tale of Keiu* of 1820 is based closely upon a Chinese prose novel. See Huynh Sanh Thong, "Introduction," in *The Tale of Keiu: A Bilingual Edition of Truyen Kieu*, by Nguyen Du, trans. Huynh Sanh Thong (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), xx, xxi.

106. See I. Widjaja, "Tertutup Pintu," *Bintang Timur*, December 29, 1963; S. I. Soedajat, "Mumpung Bulan Puasa Buja," *Bintang Timur*, January 19, 1964; and M. Alhamid, "Tenggelamnja Kapal v.d. Wijk-Magdelena," *Bintang Timur*, March 7, 1964. See also *Suluh Indonesia*, April 8, 1964; and *Trompet Masjarakat*, February 12, 1964, and August 1, 1964.

107. Quoted in Darsjaf Rahman, *Antara Imajinasi dan Hukum: Sebuah Roman Biografi H. B. Jassin* (Jakarta: Gunung Agung, 1986), 234.

108. "Sambutan Hamka atas heboh mengenai 'T . . . vd Wijk,'" *Gema Islam*, October 1, 1962.

109. See Hamka, *Ajahku* (Jakarta: Widjaya, 1950), 86; and Hamka, *Ajahku* (Jakarta: Djajmurni, 1967), 132. The changes were added to the 1963 edition (3rd), which was reprinted in 1967.

110. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 164; Fachry Ali, "Hamka dan Masyarakat Islam Indonesia," 59.

111. "Hamka dituduh plagiator?," *Berita Minggu*, September 30, 1962.

112. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 164.

113. "Kursus Dinas Imam Militer," *Gema Islam*, July 15, 1962, 26.

114. "Pengantar Redaksi," *Gema Islam*, January 15, 1963.

115. "Pemimpin Dunia jang Agung," "Tempat jang Dalam bagi Pak Nas Di Hati Townley," *Gema Islam*, April 15, 1963, 5, 27.

116. Wampa/Kosab Djendral A. H. Nasution, "Peranan P. I. I. dalam civic mission: Angkatan Bersendjata dalam rangka pembangunan masjarakat desa," *Gema Islam*, September 15, 1963, 8–10. The magazine's other military patrons, Sudirman and Rowi, were also featured prominently. See A. M. Joesoef Ahmad, "Satu tahun Gema Islam," *Gema Islam*, January 15, 1963, 8.

117. *Gema Islam*, January 15, 1963, 8; the photo of Fatmawati is on page 21.

118. Sukarno, "Tuhan Adalah Seluruh Zat, Tapi Esa," *Gema Islam*, March 1, 1963, 2 and cover.

119. See "Konfrontasi Terhadap Malaysia Adalah Perdjuangan Melenjapkan Sisa2 Kolonialisme Dari Permukaan Bumi," *Gema Islam*, September 15, 1963, 11–12.

120. See "Laporan Redaksi Memasuki Tahun Ketiga *Gema Islam*," *Gema Islam*, January 15, 1964, 6. "Nation building" is in English. On page 6 the phrase "media da'wah Islamijah" is used to describe the magazine.

121. See "Gedjala kesadaran Ummat Islam Di Indonesia: Mesdjid DiDirikan Dimana-mana," *Gema Islam*, June 15, 1963, 14–15.

122. See Ricklefs, *History*, 331–332. Ricklefs suggests that due to rising violence and PKI overreaching, support for the party may actually have been waning at this time, although this was certainly not the popular perception. See Ricklefs, *History*, 333.

123. Dr. R. Moh. Ali, "Kelenjapan Agama Islam Dari Bumi Indonesia Dalam Limapuluh Tahun," *Gema Islam*, September 15, 1963, 14–17, October 1, 1963, 13–14, January 15, 1964, 15–17.

124. Dr. R. Moh. Ali, "Kelenjapan Agama Islam Dari Bumi Indonesia Dalam Limapuluh Tahun," *Gema Islam*, January 15, 1964, 15–17.

125. A. Mukti Ali, "Pelbagai Persoalan Islam Di Indonesia Dewasa Ini," *Gema Islam*, June 1, 1963, 16.

126. "Tanja-Jawab," *Gema Islam*, May 15, 1963, 27–28.

127. H. M. Joesoef Ahmad, "Dua Tahun Gema Islam," *Gema Islam*, January 15, 1964, 9.

128. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:66.

129. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, app. 1, 209. According to Nasution, such matters at the time were handled by the police, not the military. When he later questioned the head of the National Police, Sucipto Danukusumo, about Hamka's arrest, Sucipto was "evasive," he said (interview, Nasution).

130. Hamka, "Catatan Dalam Tahanan Regime Sukarno," app. 1; Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 215, 231–232. In the accusation, the denomination of the currency was not specified.

131. According to Taufik Abdullah (interview).

132. Hamka, "Catatan Tahanan," 210–212, 219.

133. Hamka, "Catatan Tahanan," 210–211.

134. Hamka, "Catatan Tahanan," 211.

135. Hamka, "Catatan Tahanan," 212–213.

136. Hamka, "Catatan Tahanan," 214.

137. Hamka, "Catatan Tahanan," 214.

138. Hamka, "Catatan Tahanan," 216.

139. Hamka, "Catatan Tahanan," 221.

140. Hamka, "Catatan Tahanan," 216.

141. Hamka, "Catatan Tahanan," 215, 217.

142. See Mochtar Lubis, *Catatan Subversif* (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1980), 283, his notes from February 15, 1964.

143. Hamka, "Catatan Tahanan," 217.

144. Hamka, "Catatan Tahanan," 224.

145. Hamka, "Catatan Tahanan," 226.

146. Hamka, "Catatan Tahanan," 230.

147. Hamka, "Catatan Tahanan," 231. The hospital was the Rumah Sakit Persahabatan, Rawamangun. On detention sites: Hamka spent the period between January 31 and April 8 at the Akademi Polisi Sukabumi; on April 8 he was transferred to a police building in Cimacan; and on April 10 he was moved to a guarded bungalow (Harjuna) in Puncak. In June he was moved again to another detention house (Brimob) in Megamendung; from there, on August 20, he went to RS Sahabatan in Rawamangun. See Hamka, "Catatan Tahanan," 209–231.

148. See Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:66. Crouch describes Nasution's position as minister for defense and security as "relatively powerless although still influential" (*Army and Politics*, 53). See also Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism*, 196, for Sukarno's maneuvers to weaken Nasution.

149. See *Gema Islam*, April 15, 1964, where he is still among the *para pembantu*. See also *Gema Islam*, May 15, 1965, where his name is missing.

150. "Idul Adha di masdjid Al Azhar," *Gema Islam*, May 15, 1964. Vice Premier Chairul Saleh and Mentri Dalam Negri (interior minister) Ipil Gandamana attended the event.

151. See Nasution, *Terali Besi*; and Lubis, *Catatan Subversif*.

152. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:68.

153. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:73.

154. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:68.

155. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:68. The Qur'an is divided into 114 books, or *sura* (*surat*), and thirty sections called *juz'u*.

156. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:71.

157. See Vickers, *Modern Indonesia*, 154–155; Taylor, *Indonesia*, 354.

158. *Gema Islam*, May 1, 1965, mentions several active youth groups, including Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam (PMI), Sarikat Mahasiswa Islam (SMI), Pemuda

Muhammadiyah, Pemuda Muslimin, Pemuda Perti, Himpunan Mahasiswa Indonesia, Pemuda Al-Irsjad, and Pemuda Djamjatul Waslijah.

159. "Tahun-Vivere Pericoloso: Amanat Presiden/Pemimpin Besar Revolusi pada peringatan hari proklamasi kemerdekaan, 17-8-1964," *Gema Islam*, September 1, 1964, 5–10.

160. Ricklefs, *History*, 332.

161. See Rosihan Anwar, *Prahara*, 387, 400, 408–409, 413, 475, 528; see also James Rush, "Hans Bague Jassin," in *The Ramon Magsaysay Awards 1985–1987* (Manila: Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation, 1989), 298–300; and Keith Foulcher, "A Survey of Events Surrounding Manikebu," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-Land-en Volkenkunde* (*BKI*) 125 (1969): 429–465.

162. Quoted in Vickers, *Modern Indonesia*, 153.

163. Interview, Pabottingi. See also Baskara T. Wardaya, ed., *Truth Will Out: Indonesian Accounts of the 1965 Mass Violence*, trans. Jennifer Lindsay (Melbourne: Monash University Publishing, 2013), 27–37, two accounts by Muhammadiyah members.

164. Taylor, *Indonesia*, 356.

165. Ricklefs, *History*, 338; Vickers, *Modern Indonesia*, 152.

166. These had begun in the 1950s. See J. D. Legge, *Sukarno: A Political Biography* (Singapore: Archipelago Press, 2003), 332; George McT. Kahin, *Southeast Asia: A Testament* (London: Routledge/Curzon, 2003), 156.

167. Ricklefs, *History*, 339–341. There is now a large literature on this event. See especially John Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder: The September 30th Movement and Suharto's Coup d'État in Indonesia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006); Douglas Kammen and Katharine McGregor, eds., *The Contours of Mass Violence in Indonesia, 1965–68* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012); and Robert Cribb, ed., *The Indonesian Killings, 1965–1966: Studies from Java and Bali* (Clayton, Australia: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1990). Kammen and McGregor argue in their introduction that "coup" is a problematic name for the catalyzing event because "there are so many possible referents" (*Mass Violence*, 6–7).

168. This was the *Harian Rakyat*, or People's Daily. See Ricklefs, *History*, 340.

169. See Bradley R. Simpson, *Economists with Guns: Authoritarian Development and U.S.-Indonesia Relations, 1960–1968* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008); Roosa, *Pretext*, chap. 6, esp. 188–197. Roosa argues that the United States explicitly conspired beforehand with its Indonesian army allies to "blame the PKI for a coup attempt, launch a general repression of the PKI throughout the country, . . . and establish a new, army-dominated, corporatist government" (193).

170. This is a best estimate by scholars. See Ricklefs, *History*, 347 (500,000); Taylor, *Indonesia*, 359 (800,000); Robert Cribb, "The Mass Killings of 1965–1966," in Hellwig and Tagliacozzo, *The Indonesia Reader*, 346 (150,000–500,000). Kammen and McGregor, *Mass Violence*, describe and analyze the violence in detail.

171. This was Pramoedya Ananta Toer's fate. In the hysteria following the coup attempt, an army corporal arrested him, and he spent the next several years in various

prisons, including the agricultural penal camp on Buru Island, where he wrote the novels that later made him world famous. See James R. Rush, "Pramoedya Ananta Toer," in *The Ramon Magsaysay Awards 1994–1995* (Manila: Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation, 2003), 246–248. These novels included *Bumi Manusia* (*This Earth of Mankind*) and three others in the Buru Quartet.

172. Interview, Rusydi Hamka. Kammen and McGregor, *Mass Violence*, place Muhammadiyah-affiliated actors, among others, at the scene in Semarang, Solo, Blitar, and South Sulawesi (83, 97, 120, 165–167, 180). See also Siregar, "Mengenang Almarhum Prof. Dr. Hamka," 15; Hamka, *Umat Islam Menghadapi Tantangan Kristenisasi dan Sekularisasi*, ed. Rusydi Hamka (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 2003), 74; Ricklefs, *History*, 347.

173. Interview, Rusydi.

174. Christine Olsen and Curtis Levy, *Riding the Tiger*, vol. 3, *The New Order* (Australia: Australian Film Finance Proprietary Limited, 1992). Describing these events in English, Fakhri Amrullah says, "I felt something terrible coming up in my soul, my heart," and "I felt like crying and screaming."

175. Ricklefs, *History*, 349.

176. Ricklefs, *History*, 353; see also Elson, *Idea*, 244.

177. Mohammad Roem, "Politik Hamka," in Salam, *70 Tahun*, 220; Ghazali Sjahlan, "Nasehat yang Tulus Ikhlas," 77.

178. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:72. Most of the other political prisoners were released at this time, including Mohammad Roem, Anak Agung Gde Agung, Isa Anshary, Mochtar Lubis, and M. Yunan Nasution. Certain Masjumi figures, however, were held until July, including Mohammad Natsir. See Nasution, *Terali Besi*, 184–185.

179. Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 97.

180. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:73.

181. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:73.

182. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:66.

183. Hamka, "Kegagalan Manusia" (October 1966), in Hamka, *Dari Hati ke Hati*, ed. Yousran Rusydi (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 2002), 299.

184. Quoted in an editorial by Junan Helmi Nasution, *Gema Islam*, November 1, 1966; Hamka, *Tafsir*, 21:151.

185. Hamka, *Dari Hati ke Hati*, 300.

186. Interview, Rusydi.

187. Hamka, *Dari Hati ke Hati*, 301.

188. Hamka, *Dari Hati ke Hati*, 310. Hamka uses the term *ampera*, which I have translated as "suffering masses." This term became a slogan during the Sukarno era valorizing poverty and the sufferings of the poor.

189. Farchad Poeradisastra, "Memang, Kebenaran Tetap Harus Disampaikan," in Tamara, Sanusi, and Djauhari, *Hamka di Mata Hati Umat*, 160. Rusydi writes that Hamka agreed to instruct the Christian fiancé of Pramoedya Ananta Toer's daughter when she approached him personally about his conversion to Islam. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 71–72.

190. Hamka's son Irfan records that Sukarno requested this personally before he died. See Irfan Hamka, *Ayah*, 256.

191. "Pemakaman Bung Karno Sjah Menurut Peraturan2 Islam," *Pos Kota*, June 30, 1970, quoting Hamka. See also "Hamka Pimpin Tahlilan Utk Almarhum Sukarno," *Harian Kami*, June 23, 1970, which features a large photo. Abdul Karim Oei said that when Hamka received news of Sukarno's death—in the midst of a sermon at Oei's mosque—he broke down and cried (interview). Oei had known them both since the 1930s.

192. Hamka, *Dari Hati ke Hati*, 301.

Chapter 6. The New Order

1. Interview, Harun.
2. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 60–62.
3. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 99–100.
4. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1: "Kata Pengantar Tafsir Al-Azhar."
5. Interview, Rusydi.
6. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 29–31. Altogether, Hamka performed the hajj six times. Buntaran Sanusi, "Hamka Figur Kakek dan Sahabatku," in Tamara, Sanusi, and Djauhari, *Hamka di Mata Hati Umat*, 399.
7. For example, during Sukarno's Confrontation with Malaysia, Hamka and Siti Raham secretly harbored Malaysian students in their home as they arranged to slip out of the country. See "Mengapa Hamka dipenjara?," *Al-Islam* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia), May 15, 1974. On the family's habit of taking in needy students and mentees, see Poeradisastra, "Memang, Kebenaran Tetap Harus Disampaikan," 162.
8. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 18.
9. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 32–34; Irfan Hamka, *Ayah*, 265–272.
10. Hamka, *Dari Hati ke Hati*, 299.
11. "Pancasila akan hampa tanpa ketuhanan yang Maha Esa." See "Khutbah Idul Fitri di Istana Negara, 1 January 1968," in Hamka, *Dari Hati ke Hati*, 222–246, quotations from 226, 228, 229. Hamka recites the passage from the Qur'an, *sura Al-Ikhlas*, "Say, 'He is God the One'" (*The Qur'an*, trans. Haleem, 444), in Arabic and Indonesian. See Hamka, "Khutbah Idul Fitri 1968," 233.
12. Hamka, "Khutbah Idul Fitri 1968," 234.
13. Hamka, "Khutbah Idul Fitri 1968," 224, 237.
14. Hamka, "Khutbah Idul Fitri 1968," 241.
15. Many of his friends found Hamka's public optimism naive. These included Roem, Natsir, and M. Yunan Nasution (interviews).
16. Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 98–99. The new party was Partai Muslimin Indonesia (Parmusi).
17. Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 95.
18. Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 95.
19. Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 99; Mohammad Roem, "Politik Hamka," in Salam, *70 Tahun*, 91–101.

20. Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 106–107; Kahin, *Natsir*, 168–171.

21. See Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 4–5; Fachry Ali, "Hamka dan Masyarakat Islam Indonesia: Catatan Pendahualuan Riwayat dan Perjuangan," *Prisma* 2 (1983): 48–60, 58. He remained on the board until 1971.

22. Hamka, "Beratnya Kewajban Kita" (1967), in Hamka, *Dari Hati ke Hati*, 219, 220.

23. Hamka, "Peristiwa Makassar" (1967), in Hamka, *Dari Hati ke Hati*, 159–164, quotation from 163.

24. Hamka, "Mengapa Umat Islam Tak Berhasil" (1968), in Hamka, *Dari Hati ke Hati*, 302, 305.

25. Hamka, "Mengapa Umat Islam Tak Berhasil," 307, 308.

26. Snapshots show him sitting exactly this way. See also interview, Naim.

27. Hamka, "Mengapa Umat Islam tak Berhasil," 309.

28. Hamka, "Mengapa Mereka Masih Rebut: Mari Kita Berpahit-pahit kaum Muslimin Belum Puas atas Kemerdekaan Ini" (1968), in Hamka, *Dari Hati ke Hati*, 315. On the Jakarta Charter, see Elson, *Idea*, 108–109, 113–114. The text of the charter reads: "Dengan kewajiban menjalankan syari'at Islam bagi pemaluknya."

29. See Hamka, *Negara Islam*, 10, 100; and Hamka, *Islam dam Demokrasi*, 49.

30. "Orang Islam tidaklah apriori meminta agar negara Republik Indonesia ini agar bernama Rp. Indonesia Islam." Hamka, "Mengapa Mereka Masih Rebut," 316.

31. See Elson, *Idea*, 242–243.

32. Hamka, "Mengapa Mereka Masih Rebut," 316.

33. Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 108; Ricklefs, *Islamisation*, 140–150, discusses this extensively. See also the speech by Lukman Harun before the DPR-GR on July 1, 1967, titled "Bantuan Luar Negeri Kepada Agama-Agama atau Badan-Badan Keagamaan di Indonesia." Harun later compiled thirty-eight pages of graphs and statistics to illustrate the trend: "Grafik Prosentase Kenaikan/Penurunan Pemeluk Agama . . . Antar Sensus 1971–1980." Both documents provided by Lukman Harun to the author.

34. Hamka, "Mengapa Mereka Masih Rebut," 314, 315, 316.

35. Quoted in Elson, *Idea*, 248.

36. Hamka, "Tolerensi, Sekularisme, atau Sinkretism" (1968), in Hamka, *Dari Hati ke Hati*, 210.

37. See the discussion in Elson, *Idea*, 248–249.

38. Hamka, "Toleransi, Sekulerisme, atau Sinkretisme," 210.

39. See Ricklefs, *History*, 353.

40. Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 99; Noer, *Modernist Movement*, 5. Nahdlatul Ulama, however, did relatively well and retained its 1955 count of the vote: 18.7 percent.

41. Quoted in "Tadjuk Rentjana: Golkar dan Agama," *Harian Abadi*, July 16, 1971. Golkar is short for Partai Golongan Karya, or the Party of Functional Groups.

42. Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 100.

43. Quoted in Elson, *Idea*, 260.

44. Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 81.

45. See Samsul Nizar, "Hamka (1908–1981): Kajian Sosial-Intelektual dan Pemikirannya tentang Pendidikan Islam" (PhD diss., Institut Agama Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah, 2001), 77–78n87; and Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 81.

46. See Noer, "Yamin and Hamka," 253; Ricklefs, *Polarizing Javanese Society*, 1–11.

47. Hamka, "Kebatinan Bukan Agama" (1972), in Hamka, *Dari Hati ke Hati*, 1989.

48. This is the same Mukti Ali who contributed to *Islam's Echo* in the late Sukarno era. He was minister of religion under Soeharto from 1971 to 1978.

49. Hamka, "Dengan Sekularisasi Pancasila akan Kosong" (ca. 1968), in Hamka, *Dari Hati ke Hati*, 270.

50. Hamka, "Dengan Sekularisasi Pancasila akan Kosong," 269, 258. Of course, Hamka occasionally spoke of East and West himself.

51. Hamka, *Ayah*, 200–201.

52. Hamka's old associate and friend from Medan days, M. Yunan Nasution, joined Natsir and became chair of Dewan Dakwah. The two men had been imprisoned together during the Sukarno years.

53. The degree was given in the Fakultas Pengajian Islam (Faculty of Islamic Studies).

54. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 167–168; Hamka, "Sambutan Sebagai Ketua Umum Majelis Ulama Tanggal 27 Juli 1975," in Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 247.

55. Interview, Basri. Basri said that he's "not a fanatic." Abdurrahman Wahid of NU remarked that Hamka was a Muhammadiyah leader "who didn't antagonize traditionalists" and who promoted dialogue (interview).

56. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 168–169.

57. See "Lembaga Fatwa Tidak Perlu Diadakan," *Harian Abadi*, October 2, 1970.

58. Vickers, *Modern Indonesia*, 171.

59. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 168–169.

60. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 168.

61. Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 79; Vickers, *Modern Indonesia*, 166.

62. Vickers, *Modern Indonesia*, 167.

63. These included the so-called Broad Guidelines of Indonesian State Policy, or Garis2 Besar Haluan Negara (GBHN).

64. Interviews, Natsir and Roem. Roem said that Hamka was extremely naive in accepting the post and that he was lending his prestige to "a dishonorable enterprise."

65. See K. H. E. Z. Muttaqien, "Biarlah Saya Berhenti," in Tamara, Sanusi, and Djauhari, *Hamka di Mata Hati Umat*, 209.

66. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 169.

67. Mohammad Rasjidi told me that Hamka's prestige was such that he could have prevented the creation of the Majelis altogether simply by refusing to lead it, but he was too vain and opportunistic to say no (interview). See also Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 170.

68. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 169. Rusydi writes that he was against his father's leading the Majelis.

69. Mukti Ali, "Persepsi Buya Hamka," in Tamara, Sanusi, and Djauhari, *Hamka di Mata Hati Umat*, 55. Other groups in attendance included Syarikat Islam, Perti, al-Ittihadiyah, and al-Wasliyah.

70. See Vickers, *Modern Indonesia*, 167.

71. Hamka, "Sambutan Sebagai Ketua," 254–255, 256, 258.

72. Q 65:3, *The Qur'an*, trans. Haleem, 378. Hamka renders the verse in Arabic and Indonesian in "Sambutan Sebagai Ketua," 255.

73. Hamka, "Sambutan Sebagai Ketua," 248–252, 254, 256.

74. Q 9:112, *The Qur'an*, trans. Haleem, 126. See also Hamka, "Sambutan Sebagai Ketua," 252–253.

75. Hamka, "Sambutan Sebagai Ketua," 255.

76. Hamka, "Sambutan Sebagai Ketua," 216.

77. Hamka, "Sambutan Sebagai Ketua," 258.

78. Board of Advisors, Dewan Pertimbangan. Formally speaking, President Soeharto and his vice president were the Majelis's patrons.

79. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 170–171. This was officially a temporary office, to serve until the new national Istiqlal mosque was completed.

80. Interview, Harun; Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 181.

81. Before being permitted to give a sermon in Kudus, Central Java, in 1976, for example, he was warned not to speak about corruption, according to Mohammad Roem, who was with him. See *Berita Buana*, July 25, 1981.

82. Indonesia's Muslim mass organizations also had their own *fatwa* bodies: the Tarjih Muhammadiyah and Syuriah NU, for example. See "MUI: Kisah Sebuah Jambatan," *Tempo*, May 30, 1981, 15.

83. Quoted in "Negara Hukum," *Sinar Indonesia Baru*, February 10, 1980.

84. Quoted in *Merdeka*, August 4, 1978.

85. "Hamka: MUI Bukan Alat Politik," *Kompas*, February 14, 1980; "Hamka: Tidak Salah Naik Haji dengan Niat untuk Mati," *Merdeka*, October 17, 1980; "Hamka setuju sembahyang minta hujan," *Berita Buana*, September 22, 1976; "Komentar Buya Hamka kawin Suntik Tanpa Sperma Suami sama dengan Zinah," *Terbit*, October 15, 1980; "MUI: Kisah."

86. "Penjelasan Buya Hamka mengenai syahid ganda," *Pelita*, December 7, 1978.

87. "Tidak Ada Perbedaan Tanggal Idulfitri," *Kompas*, July 14, 1980. Hamka personally followed the mathematical (*hisab*) calculations.

88. In his series on the hajj in *Pelita Andalas*, August 2–13, 1927.

89. "Calon Haji Dapat Pilih Syech di Jakarta," *Kompas*, July 14, 1976. K. H. Bisri Samsuri was also part of the delegation.

90. Interviews, Natsir, Harun, Roem; "Buya Hamka ditipu secara licik oleh Sawito," *Berita Buana*, January 17, 1976; "Prof. Hamka Boleh Siaran Lagi," *Kompas*, October 7, 1976; "Hamka merasa dijerumuskan Sawito," *Kompas*, October 1, 1976;

"Hamka kembali beri khotbah di TVRI-RRI," *Merdeka*, October 7, 1976; and "Hamka Hari Ini Adakan Pembicaraan Dgn Menpan," *Pikiran Rakjat Bandung*, October 6, 1976. The "Sawito Affair" is discussed at length in David Bourchier, *Dynamics of Dissent in Indonesia: Sawito and the Phantom Coup* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Cornell University, 1984).

91. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 171.

92. Interview, Rusydi.

93. See Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 171, 175–179. Rusydi writes that his father forbade him from publicizing this at home.

94. Interviews, Roem, Harun.

95. See "MUI: Kisah," 15–17.

96. Q 60:9, *The Qur'an*, trans. Haleem, 369; interview, Lukman Harun.

97. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 171–173.

98. "Atas berkat rahmat Allah Yang Maha Kuasa dan dengan didorongkan oleh keiningan luhur, supaya berkehidupan kebangsaan yang bebas, maka rakyat Indonesia menyatakan dengan ini kemerdekaannya." This is the third clause/sentence of the preamble. See http://indonesia.ahrchk.net/news/mainfile.php/Constitution/22/.

99. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 184.

100. Hamka, "Surat Pribadi Kepada Presiden Suharto" (1976), in Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 279–280.

101. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 186.

102. Hamka, "Surat Pribadi," 282. Among the terms or names applied to the belief groups are *kepercayaan*, *kebatinan*, *kejawen*, *klenik*, and *gomojowo* (277).

103. Hamka, "Surat Pribadi," 277, 280, 282, 283; see also Judith Becker, *Gamelan Stories: Tantrism, Islam, and Aesthetics in Central Java* (Tempe: Program for Southeast Asian Studies, Arizona State University, 1993), 17–19.

104. Hamka, "Surat Pribadi," 284.

105. See Ken Ward, "Soeharto's Javanese Pancasila," in *Soeharto's New Order and Its Legacy: Essays in Honour of Harold Crouch*, ed. Edward Aspinall and Greg Fealy (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2010), 28.

106. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 187.

107. Interview, Roem.

108. See "MUI: Kisah," 16. See also Ricklefs's extensive discussion of this issue in *Islamisation*, 132–138.

109. Interview, Harun.

110. Vickers, *Modern Indonesia*, 175. See also Roem, "Politik Hamka," 8–12.

111. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 187–189; Roem, "Politik Hamka," 12. Yoga Sugama led BAKIN (Badan Koordinasi Intelijen Negara, or the State Intelligence Coordinating Agency).

112. See the front-page stories in *Waspada Medan*, February 19, 1978; and "Hamka Hari Jumat Genap 70 Tahun; Besyukur Tak Cuma Jadi Penonton," *Sinar Harapan*, February 16, 1978.

113. Alfian, "Hamka dan Ayahnya," in Salam, *70 Tahun*, 125–130, 125.

114. Taufik Abdullah, "Masa Awal Muhammadiyah di Minangkabau: Cuplikan dari Arsip Belanda," in Salam, *70 Tahun*, 131–134, 131.

115. Deliar Noer, "Hamka dan Sejarah," in Salam, *70 Tahun*, 106–117.

116. Nurcholish Madjid, "Buya Hamka Profil Seorang Ulama Berjiwa Independen," in Salam, *70 Tahun*, 252, 255.

117. As noted earlier, the famous *Indonesian-English Dictionary* by John Echols and Hassan Shadily, 98, uses Hamka to illustrate the meaning of *buya*.

118. "Pokoh dan Tokoh," *Tempo*, February 18, 1978, 14–15. See also "Hari Ini Buya Hamka Genap Berusia 70 Tahun," *Sinar Indonesia Baru*, February 17, 1978; and "Hamka Hari Jumat Genap 70 Tahun."

119. See "Khutbah Idul Fitri Prof. Hamka," *Berita Yudha*, September 6, 1978.

120. Contributors to his Festschrift described him repeatedly as a "big person" (*orang besar*).

121. "Hamka Hari Jumat Genap 70 Tahun."

122. Excerpted in Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 190, 191.

123. "Prof. Hamka: Bantulah Arab dengan apa saja," *Pedoman*, October 19, 1973.

124. A contemporary account by an Indonesian journalist is Nasir Tamara, *Revolusi Iran* (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1980).

125. "Menurut Hamka Khomeini Hampir Sama dengan Bung Karno," *Merdeka*, June 22, 1981.

126. "Majelis Ulama Indonesia Bicaralah!," *Kompas*, December 11, 1980; interviews, Harun, Rusydi.

127. See "Tidak Benar Saya Mengutuk Ayatollah Khomeini," appended to Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 300–301. Sudomo was Pangkopkamtib, or Panglima Komando Operasi Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban.

128. "Kepada Pangkopkamtib Sudomo," appended to Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 299–300. See also "Surat dari Buya Hamka: Tidak Benar Saya . . . ," *Media Indonesia*, December 11, 1979; and "Penjelasan Prof Dr. Hamka," *Pelita*, December 12, 1979.

129. Interview, Rusydi.

130. Interviews, Harun, Rusydi. See also "Buya Hamka Laporkan kunjungannya ke Iran," *Berita Buana*, July 8, 1980.

131. "Buya Hamka Menjelaskan tentang Arti Jihad," *Suara Merdeka*, April 8, 1981. See also Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 193.

132. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 192.

133. Wan Sabri Wan Yusof points out that the *fatwa* did not forbid Muslims from participating in Christmas-season social events, only rituals and acts of worship ("Hamka's *Tafsir al-Azhar*: Qur'anic Exegesis as a Mirror of Social Change" [PhD diss., Temple University, 1997], 195).

134. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 194.

135. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 195.

136. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 195–196, includes Hamka's May 18, 1981, resignation letter in its entirety. See also "Buya, Fatwa dan Kerukunan Beragama," *Tempo*, May 30, 1981, 12–17.

137. "Prof. Hamka Letakan Jabatan Ketua Umum MUI," *Kompas*, May 23, 1981.

138. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 197.

139. Interview, Roem.

140. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 197; "Presiden Soeharto Percaya Hamka Tetap akan Sampaikan Saran-Pertimbangan kepada Pemerintahan," *Kompas*, May 25, 1981. Other media coverage on Hamka's resignation includes "Pemerintah keluarkan pernyataan ttg pengunduran Hamka," *Angkatan Bersenjata*, May 25, 1981; "Hamka resmi mengundurkan diri sebagai Ketua Umum MUI," *Pelita*, May 22, 1981; "Prof Dr Hamka Mundur Sebagai Ketua Umum MUI," *Berita Buana*, May 23, 1981; "Pernyataan Pemerintah Ttg Hamka," *Sinar Harapan*, May 23, 1981; "Komentar2 atas pengunduran Hamka," *Pelita*, May 22, 1981; and "Prof Hamka Letakan Jabatan Ketua Umum MUI," *Kompas*, May 23, 1981.

141. M. A. S. Abdel Haleem, introduction to *The Qur'an*, trans. Haleem, xvi.

142. Muslim scholars, including Hamka, do not consider the Qur'an as poetry or prose or any other genre of writing. Even in its literary style it is considered unique. See Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:18.

143. Feener, "Exegesis," 52. See Kate Zebiri's succinct discussion of the evolution of the *tafsir* genre in *Maḥmūd Shaltūt*, 128–132.

144. Walid A. Saleh, *The Formation of the Classical Tafsir Tradition: The Qur'an Commentary of al-Tha'labi (D. 427/1035)* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 2.

145. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:51.

146. See Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:28–29. The first Latin Qur'an appeared in 1153 CE. Martin Luther produced the first printed Qur'an in 1543. Haleem, "Introduction," in *The Qur'an*, trans. Haleem, xxxvii.

147. As Azyumardi Azra comments, these early texts consisted of "only a fragment of commentary on *surah* 18 (al-Kahf.)" (*Origins*, 80).

148. Feener, "Exegesis," 55. On the profound influence of al-Singkili's *tafsir* in Southeast Asia, see Azra, *Origins*, 80–82.

149. Azra, *Origins*, 81.

150. See, for example, Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:48.

151. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:52. Harun Nasution points out, however, that after verse 125 of *Al-Nisa'*, Rashid Rida's *tafsir* deviates from Abduh's teaching. See Nasution, *Muhammad Abduh*, 6; see also Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 231, regarding Rida's shift in a Wahhabist direction.

152. Qutb's *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* was first serialized in a magazine (of the Muslim Brothers) and subsequently published in book form in 1953. See Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb*, xvii.

153. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:29, 51.

154. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:52.

155. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:53.

156. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:53.

157. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:29.

158. *Al-Nisa'* is rendered as *An-Nisaa* in Hamka's *Tafsir*. In Indonesian, *aya* (Arabic) is *ayat*, *sura* is *surat*, and so on.

159. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 4:241–242.

160. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 4:243. Haleem's interpretation of some of this verse differs from Hamka's. See *The Qur'an*, trans. Haleem, 50. H. B. Jassin in his Indonesian translation of the Qur'an also renders the passage somewhat differently than Hamka does. See Jassin, *Bacaan Mulia*, 101.

161. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 4:243.

162. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 4:244.

163. The Hadith of al-Bukhari and Muslim are considered the most authoritative, or *shahih*. Hamka also cites several others. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 4:244. For a discussion of the origins of this story and a different interpretation, see Chouki El Hamel, *Black Morocco: A History of Slavery, Race, and Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 38–39.

164. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 4:244.

165. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 4:246.

166. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 4:247.

167. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 4:245.

168. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 4:246.

169. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 4:248. Boy-girls, *sibujang-gadis*, is a very Indonesia-specific usage.

170. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 4:248. The Haleem translation interprets this passage differently: "Be mindful of God, in whose name you make requests of one another" (*The Qur'an*, trans. Haleem, 50). H. B. Jassin seems to have interpreted the passage similarly, using the Indonesian word *minta*, "to request or ask for," instead of *tanya*, "to ask about," which is the word Hamka uses. See Jassin, *Bacaan Mulia*, 101.

171. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 4:249.

172. Q 49:13; Hamka, *Tafsir*, 4:251. *The Qur'an*, trans. Haleem, 339, says "races and tribes."

173. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 4:251.

174. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 4:251.

175. Yusuf, "Corak Pemikiran Kalam."

176. Yusuf also refers to a secondary rationalist school, Maturidiyah Samarkand, and a second traditionalist school, Maturidiyah Bukhara. See Yusuf, "Corok Pemikiran Kalam," 14–15. On Mu'tazilism, see Martin and Woodward, *Defenders of Reason*, 10–19, and part 2 for the Indonesian case.

177. In his analysis of Hamka's *tafsir*, Yusuf applies the same methodology used by his mentor, Harun Nasution, in Harun Nasution, *Muhammad Abduh dan Teologi Rasional*

Mu'tazilah (Jakarta: Penerbit Universitas Indonesia, 1987). In Yusuf's Indonesian-language study, "free will" and "predestination" are both given in English.

178. Paraphrasing Q 9:112, *The Qur'an*, trans. Haleem, 126: "who order what is good and forbid what is wrong."

179. See Yusuf, "Corak Pemikiran Kalam," 15–135.

180. See Yusuf, "Corak Pemikiran Kalam," 250. Mark Woodward writes that this is characteristic of Indonesia's modernists. See Martin and Woodward, *Defenders of Reason*, 120.

181. Quoted in Yusuf, "Corak Pemikiran Kalam," 146.

182. Q 17:36; Hamka, *Tafsir*, 15:64. Compare *The Qur'an*, trans. Haleem, 177: "what you do not know to be true."

183. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 15:65.

184. Yusuf identifies this point of view with the Maturidiyah Bukhara school. See his discussion in "Corak Pemikiran Kalam," 141–158. For Mutazilah rationalists, Yusuf tells us, God's revelation *confirmed* what human reason discerned.

185. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 15:193; Q 18:29.

186. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 15:193.

187. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 29:274; Q 76:3.

188. Yusuf, "Corak Pemikiran Kalam," 171.

189. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 22:329.

190. Yusuf, "Corak Pemikiran Kalam," 173–178.

191. See the discussion in Yusuf, "Corak Pemikiran Kalam," 180–182.

192. In the degree of his rationalist leanings, Hamka was atypical of Muhammadiyah's formal theological positions, says Mark Woodward. See Martin and Woodward, *Defenders of Reason*, 142. See also Wan Sabri, "Hamka's *Tafsir*," 192.

193. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 16:122.

194. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 16:122; Q 20:5, *The Qur'an*, trans. Haleem, 196; Hamka, *Tafsir*, 14:108; Q 39:67, *The Qur'an*, trans. Haleem, 299: "The heavens will be rolled up in His right hand."

195. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 24:109. Here Hamka refers to "tiap-tiap cerita semacam ini."

196. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 29:248–249; Q 75:23: "Kepada Tuhannya dia akan melihat." Cf. *The Qur'an*, trans. Haleem, 399: "looking towards their Lord."

197. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 29:255.

198. Yusuf, "Corak Pemikiran Kalam," 78, 182–183.

199. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 26:249; Q 49:14–15.

200. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 26:247, 250.

201. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:53; Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Qur'an: Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*, ed. and trans. Adil Salahi, 18 vols. (Leicestershire, UK: Islamic Foundation and Islamonline.net, 1999–2009).

202. See Olivier Carré, *Mysticism and Politics: A Critical Reading of "Fi Zilal al-Qur'an" by Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966)*, trans. Carol Artigues, rev. W. Shepard (Leiden:

Brill, 2003), 163; Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones* (New Delhi: Islamic Book Service, 2002), chap. 10.

203. Qutb's ideas changed considerably over the years, becoming more radical with time. Those discussed here represent his mature and most influential thinking. *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*, vols. 1–10 (*suras* 1–15), reflect his later ideas. See John Calvert, *Sayyid Qutb and the Origins of Radical Islamism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 9–17, 202–205; Carré, *Mysticism*; and Shepard, introduction to *Sayyid Qutb*.

204. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:277; Q 2:64. Compare this with Qutb, *Fi Zilal*, 1:147, where he speaks of Zionism, Christian imperialism, and Communism and their combined assault "against Islam and the Muslim community."

205. See Mun'im Sirry, *Scriptural Polemics: The Qur'an and Other Religions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 17–18, where he says that the 1981 *fatwa* led to a "negative image in the eyes of Indonesian progressive Muslims." See also Wan Sabri, "Hamka's *Tafsir*," 195.

206. Qutb, *Fi Zilal*, 1:418.

207. See Hamka, *Tafsir*, 21:150–151.

208. See his discussion of Q 9:29 in Hamka, *Tafsir*, 10:159–160.

209. Quoted in Sirry, *Polemics*, 86. From Hamka, *Tafsir*, 3:161.

210. Sirry, *Polemics*, 89; see Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:263–265; Q 2:62.

211. See Wan Sabri, "Hamka's *Tafsir*," 195.

212. Quoted in Sirry, *Polemics*, 89–90. See also Q 2:62; Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:277.

213. See Qutb, *Fi Zilal*, 8:102–103, on Q 9:29, where Qutb states unequivocally that Jews and Christians are among the "unbelievers." See also Carré, *Mysticism*, 157–158.

214. Quoted in Carré, *Mysticism*, 228.

215. Qutb, *Fi Zilal*, 8:123.

216. Qutb applied the doctrine of abrogation, in which later-revealed passages trump earlier ones. Here is his summation of the sequence of revelation concerning *jihad* in the Qur'an, from Qutb, *Milestones*, 64: "The Muslims were first restrained from fighting; then they were permitted to fight; later on they were commanded to fight against the aggressors; and finally they were commanded to fight against all the polytheists."

217. See Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 234–236.

218. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 11:87; Q 9:122.

219. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 10:159; Q 9:29.

220. Sirry, *Polemics*, 86, emphasizes Hamka's reliance on Rashid Rida's *tafsir*. See also Wan Sabri, "Hamka's *Tafsir*," 178. Calvert, *Origins*, 202, speaks of Qutb's "totalistic imperative."

221. Qutb, *Fi Zilal*, 4:29, 30.

222. Hamka, "Mengapa Mereka Masih Rebut," 315; see also Hamka, *Tafsir*, 6:147–152, on the evolution of Islamic society in response to time and place.

223. Qutb, *Fi Zilal*, 3:32.

224. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 4:266.

225. "We must be freed from the Western way of thinking," he wrote. Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb*, 297.

226. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 4:264, 266.

227. Sirry makes this very point when he says, "In most cases, he attempts to 'indigenize' the meaning of the Koran to fit the Indonesian experience" (*Polemics*, 208).

228. See Carré, *Mysticism*, 173; Calvert, *Origins*, 17.

229. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:276.

230. See Hamka, *Tafsir*, 3:274.

231. Q 39:18, *The Qur'an*, trans. Haleem, 296; Hamka, *Tafsir*, 24:42–44.

232. Q 2:195; Hamka, *Tafsir*, 2:174.

233. Q 4:158, *The Qur'an*, trans. Haleem, 65; Hamka, *Tafsir*, 6:32, 36. Note that Hamka accepts uncritically the propaganda-driven assertion that the Communists actually perpetrated the September 30 murders.

234. Q 31:6, *The Qur'an*, trans. Haleem, 261.

235. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 21:151.

236. See Q 9:103 and Q 2:29; Hamka, *Tafsir*, 11:37.

237. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 11:238: "Makan hati terulam jantung." See also the *pantun*s on the dangers of flirtation (it's all in the eyes) in Hamka, *Tafsir*, 18:206, 207.

238. See, for example, Hamka, *Tafsir*, 24:276. A *keris*, or kris, is a "wavy double-bladed dagger" (Echols and Shadily, *Indonesian-English Dictionary*, 287).

239. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 19:270.

240. Q 24:31: "And tell believing women that they should lower their glances, guard their private parts, and not display their charms beyond what [is acceptable] to reveal" (*The Qur'an*, trans. Haleem, 222).

241. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 18:213, 214.

242. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 6:165; 21:15. Hamka had a much better experience in the United States than Qutb did. See Calvert, *Origins*, 139–155.

243. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 27:12–13; 25:115; Q 44:29, *The Qur'an*, trans. Haleem, 322.

244. Q 10:22, *The Qur'an*, trans. Haleem, 131.

245. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 22:227.

246. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 11:66.

247. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 11:268.

248. See Hamka, *Tafsir*, 11:226.

249. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 11:269.

250. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 12:226, 227. The *sura Jusuf* begins with a dream and speaks of interpreting dreams. See Q 12:4, 21, 36, 43–44.

251. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 192.

252. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 199.

253. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 74.

254. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat*, 206.

255. "Kita Telah Ditinggalkan Tokoh Ulama Besar," *Berita Buana*, July 25, 1981. See Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:71, one of many places where he speaks of the crowds who flocked

to Ibn Taymiya's funeral. Many of Hamka's obituaries and related essays were published in *Perjalanan Terakhir Buya Hamka* (Jakarta: Penerbit Panji Masyarakat, 1981).

Conclusion

1. See Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 31.

2. Taylor, *Indonesia*, xviii.

3. Berkhofer, *Beyond the Great Story*, 40.

4. Particularly important were new PhDs mentored by Fazlur Rahman at the University of Chicago, including Harun Nasution, Nurcholish Madjid, and Sjafi'i Maarif. Hefner comments that these new PhDs "returned home preaching variants of Fazlurian neomodernism and Mu'tazilah rationalism" (*Civil Islam*, 110).

5. They were similar in other ways. Just as Hamka hailed from a prominent lineage of Minangkabau *ulama*s, Wahid, a Javanese, was the grandson of Nahdlatul Ulama's founder, Hasyim Asjari, and the son of Indonesia's first minister of religion, Wahid Hasyim. At the time Wahid was a rising star in Nahdlatul Ulama and an increasingly influential reform-minded traditionalist. See Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 119.

6. For Wahid's full argument, see Abdurrahman Wahid, "Benarkah Buya Hamka Seorang Besar? Sebuah Pengantar," in Tamara, *Hamka di Mata*, 17–50, quotes on 30 and 24. Although Wahid is speaking of the arts here, this comment comports with his entire discussion of the quality of Hamka's oeuvre.

7. Wahid, "Benarkah Buya Hamka Seorang Besar?," 36.

8. Interview, Wahid, emphasis added.

9. Madjid, "Buya Hamka Profil Seorang Ulama Berjiwa Independen," 252–255; see also Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 116–118; and Howell, "Sufism," 712n21.

10. Madjid, "Buya Hamka Profil Seorang Ulama Berjiwa Independen," 255. Madjid mentions Al-Azhar's sophisticated modern school system and even its amplified calls to prayer.

11. Rahardjo, *Intelektual, Inteligensia*, 210, 213. See also the appreciative essay by Taufik Abdullah, "Hamka dalam Struktur dan Dinamik Keulamaan," in Tamara, Sanusi, and Djauhari, *Hamka di Mata Hati Umat*, 399–420.

12. The *jilbab* covers the hair and neck but not the face. Recall that Hamka believed the full purdah of the Arabs—covering the face as well—was extreme.

13. Husin, "Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia," 318.

14. R. William Liddle writes, "The term *santri*, literally a student in a traditional Islamic school, is used widely in Indonesia to distinguish devout from nondevout, or more accurately syncretistic" ("The Islamic Turn in Indonesia: A Political Explanation," *Journal of Asian Studies* 55 [1996]: 616n3).

15. Robert W. Hefner, "Islamizing Java? Religion and Politics in Rural East Java," *Journal of Asian Studies* 46 (1987): 551. See also Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 248n69, 256nn71, 72. Howell, "Sufism," 701, summarizes the changes. See also John Sidel, *Riots, Pogroms, Jihad: Religious Violence in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 52–53.

16. See Robert W. Hefner, "Religious Conflict and Political Debates among Indonesian Muslims," in *Islam in Contemporary Indonesia*, Proceedings of a Workshop sponsored by the U.S.-Indonesia Society, March 11, 1997 (Washington, DC: U.S.-Indonesia Society, 1997), 23; Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 120–121.

17. Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 120, 252n32. In such areas, the PKI had flourished, as Hamka noted.

18. Ricklefs, *Islamisation*, 241; Noorhaidi Hasan, *Laskar Jihad: Islam, Militancy, and the Quest for Identity in Post-New Order Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program Publications, Cornell University, 2006), 215, 39–43.

19. Quoting Ricklefs, *Islamisation*, 241. See also Hasan, *Laskar Jihad*, chap. 1, "The Expansion of 'Salafis.'"

20. Ricklefs, *Islamisation*, 268; Hasan, *Laskar Jihad*, 17, 22, 211.

21. Ricklefs, *Islamisation*, 499. Hasan concludes, "The militancy and violence that engulfed Indonesia in the early years of this new century actually spurred Indonesian Muslims to work more systematically in vocal support of democracy, gender equality, and human rights" (*Laskar Jihad*, 221).

22. See Hamka's speech of 1969 in Ricklefs, *Islamisation*, 171.

23. Qutb's life is recounted in Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb*, xi–xxii, among others.

24. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 17:139.

25. Hamka, *Dari Hati ke Hati*, 301. On all religions, see "Khutbah Idul Fitri 1968," 224, 237.

26. "Buya Hamka Menjelaskan tentang Arti Jihad," *Suara Merdeka*, April 8, 1981. See also Hamka, "Hak-Hak Manusia (Jihad dan Syahid)," in Hamka, *Dari Hati ke Hati*, 8–9.

27. Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb*, xv, quote on 25.

28. Quoted in Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb*, 277.

29. By the 2000s, notes M. C. Ricklefs, there was "an increasing openness to Sufism of the type promoted by Hamka six decades before" in *Modern Sufism* (*Islamisation*, 362). Julia Howell credits Hamka directly for the new florescence in Sufism, citing the popularity of his *Tasauf Modern* and *Tasauf: Perkembangan dan Pemurniannya* in the 1970s and 1980s ("Sufism," 710–712). See also Martin and Woodward, *Defenders of Reason*, 10.

30. Most recently in 2011 and 2013, respectively. Henk Maier writes that Hamka's *The Sinking* (*Tenggelamnya Kapal* van der Wijck) is "one of the best-selling Malay books of all time" (*We Are Playing Relatives*, 341).

31. Sirry, *Polemics*, 17.

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